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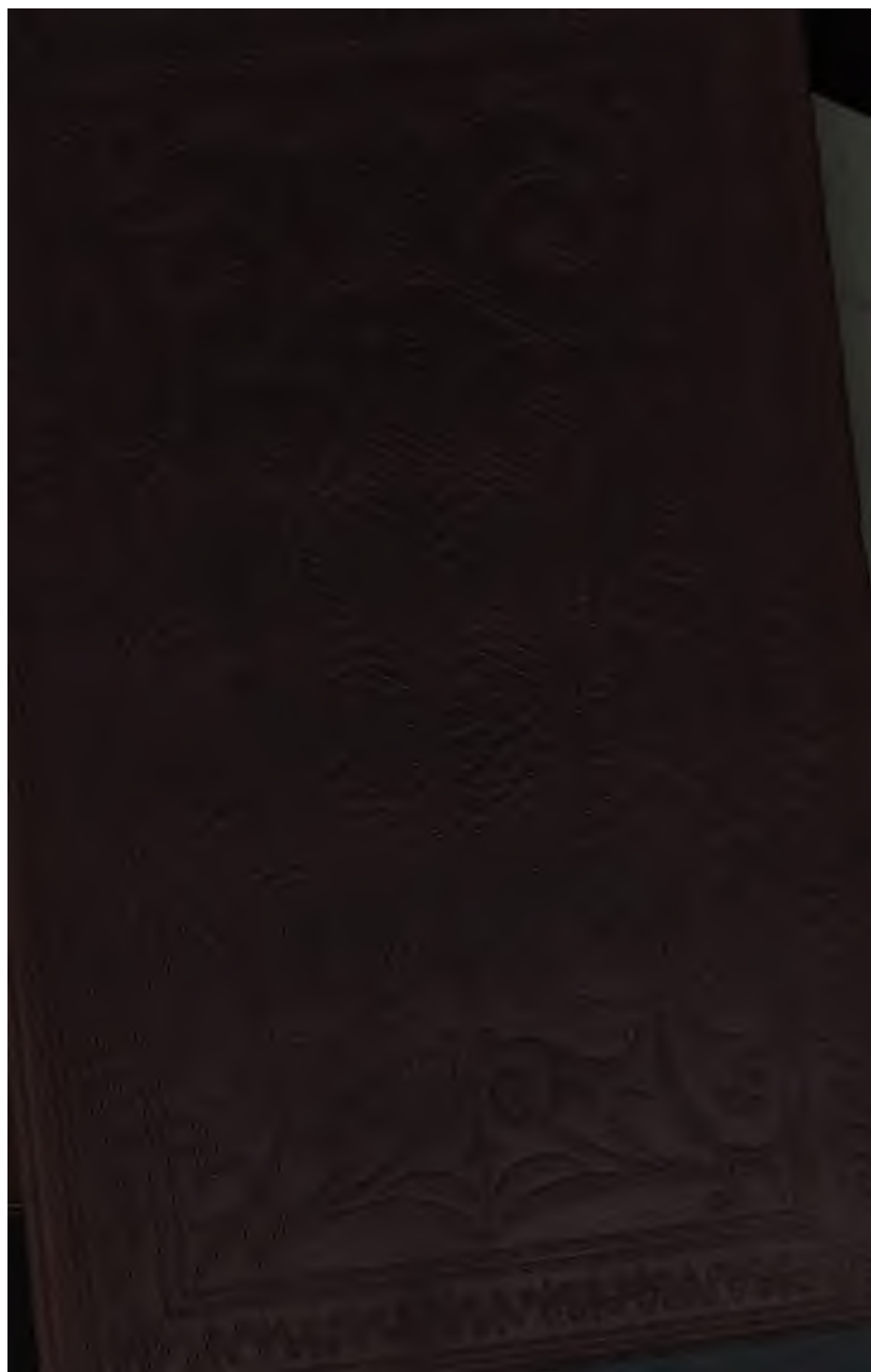
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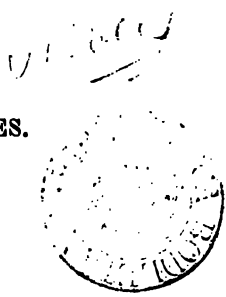
THE  
SQUIRE OF BEECHWOOD.

A TRUE TALE.

BY  
"SCRUTATOR."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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TO  
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT,

&c., &c.

DEAR LORD DUKE,

IN availing myself of your kind permission to dedicate the following Tale to your Grace, I must claim the greatest possible indulgence for the many imperfections both of style and composition, with which I am fully aware its pages abound. I have no pretensions to a literary character, and, as your Grace is well aware, would much rather handle the horn than the pen ; but, as the former occupation is now denied me, the latter is adopted in its place, to beguile the *tedium vitæ*, or idle hours, which would otherwise pass heavily away, jacking the exciting employment of my earlier years. Although born and bred a true son of Nimrod, my ideas, like his, have not been solely occupied with the chase ; but human as well as animal nature has been my study. Leaving for awhile the exhilarating scenes of sporting life, I have now ventured upon a more ha-



zardous, though not less interesting theme—the delineation of human characters, (such, at least, as have come under my own observation,) which, although wanting the skilful finishing touches of an accomplished artist, are strictly original. Deprecating the criticism of the world, which I have no wish to provoke, and feeling secure of your Grace's kind condonation for its numerous faults, I submit this crude, unvarnished tale to your highly esteemed patronage and perusal, in the hope that it may tend to amuse a leisure hour, when your Grace may be relieved from the many duties and avocations which your high position entails upon your time. To your Grace's grandfather and the late lamented Duke, I have been indebted for many acts of kindness and consideration; and to yourself, my grateful thanks are now due, for lending your friendly assistance in launching me on this novel sphere of action; and feeling assured that any success which may attend the publication of this Work, must be attributed chiefly, if not entirely, to the prestige of your Grace's high name, rather than to any intrinsic merits of its own,

I have the honour to remain,

Dear Lord Duke,

Most faithfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

# THE SQUIRE OF BEECHWOOD.

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## CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful autumnal evening, about the middle of October, in the year 18—. The last rays of the setting sun were yet lingering on the bronzed leaves of the beech woods, on the opposite hill-side, when two youths might be seen sauntering arm-in-arm down the avenue leading from the old Manor House of Willsbury to the outskirts of the village.—The evening was delightfully calm, and all nature quietly sinking into repose. The birds were still among

the trees, save the shrill notes of the robin, which, hopping to and fro on the gravel walk, seemed anxious to invite the attention of the passer-by.—A gentle ripple played over the lake, whose slightly excited waves broke at intervals, in dull and sullen sound upon its banks. The chop of some large trout might be distinctly heard, as he rose to the surface of the water, to seize his winged prey; and the tinkle of the sheep-bell on the distant hill, served alone to break the stillness that reigned around.

It was the season of the year betokening the gradual decay of vegetable nature, too clearly exhibited in the changed and still changing hues of the foliage of the trees, which was gently and almost imperceptibly stealing their beauties away, like the gradual decline of manhood's prime, sinking by slow degrees into withered old age.

From the beautiful works of the vegetable world, let us now turn to that still more beautiful and mysterious creation—Man—that mas-

terpiece of our Almighty Creator.—“For in the image of God created he man.”—Before us are seen two children of our fallen race; like their first parents in the garden of Eden, as yet walking in innocency and peace; their young hearts as yet untutored in the knowledge of crime,—as yet untried in the furnace of temptation, from which so little real gold comes forth. The elder of these youths had just entered his nineteenth year, the other might be about two years his junior.

Robert and Henry Howard were the sons of gentlemen of old family, and large landed property, in the West of England, and, at the time I have just introduced them to my readers, residing in the village of Willsbury, in one of the Midland counties, with a clergyman, to finish their education for the university.

Their tutor, who was also the pastor of the village, was one of the old orthodox school, and a man of the most upright and honourable ideas. He was not only deeply versed in classical, as well

as mathematical lore, but well read in modern literature. His natural talents were also displayed in various mechanical arts, excelling in every thing he undertook. He was a capital shot, when a few leisure hours were allowed him for recreation in the field, and a most expert and finished angler ; his flies so beautifully and naturally finished off, that the finny race were deceived by their attractive appearance ; and when other fly books failed, his could generally produce some fairy specimen, which would lure even the most cautious old trout to the surface of the stream, from which he soon found himself most unceremoniously transferred to the grassy bank. Mr. Meredith possessed a kind and cheerful disposition, and his eye (the index of his mind), when in society, sparkled with the joyous, witty, and benevolent thoughts which chased each other in rapid succession through a heart open always to the allurements of refined society, but never closed to the appeal of the poor and distressed. In school hours, however, he was strict, although communicative ;

ever ready to give explanations, or assist in unravelling abstruse and difficult passages, and anxious to elicit his pupil's ideas.

With him religion formed an integral part of education ; in fact, it was considered by him the key-stone of the building. He knew full well, that *that* was the only armour which could secure his pupils against the fierce attacks of passion, or the subtle and more insidious advances of temptation, assuming such varied attitudes of assault.

Morality is as a thin gauze-like upper vesture, calculated only for fine weather ; but the garment which is to resist the pelting of the pitiless storm of this world's raising, must be composed of more firm and compact materials. Religion, the Religion of the Gospel, is the only safeguard in times of trial, adversity, or suffering ; it is the sheet-anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, upon which alone the vessel can hold on, and ride through the gale when tossed by the rough tempest, or threatening waves of this boisterous sea of life ! In all education, religion

should form the ground-work ; it will last, when all else gives way and crumbles into ruins.

This worthy tutor taught his pupils self-government and self-respect. He pointed out to them, that as they would soon be removed from under his care, to the little world of the universities, it was his duty to prepare them for this change of life. He therefore gave them free permission to go where they liked during their hours of recreation, and to visit and accept invitations from any of the gentlemen's families in the neighbourhood.

"Remember," he would say, "you are gentlemen, the sons of gentlemen, as well as my pupils, take care you bring no discredit on your parents or your tutor."

Treating them with confidence like this, it will not be surprising that his pupils regarded him as a friend ; and in this light it was his pride to be considered.

Robert and Henry Howard had been paying a visit to the family at the Old Manor House, having been commissioned to convey an invi-

tation to their tutor, for a dinner party, which was to take place in a few days.

Before introducing to my readers the inmates of this old mansion, it may be as well to give a description of these two youths, now first presented to their notice. In bodily form, they appeared to have been cast nearly in the same mould, being both of slight though well-proportioned figures, displaying in their small hands and feet the characteristic of high breeding. The features of Robert were singularly handsome; his eyes dark and brilliant, his mouth small, with a short upper lip compressed over a set of white pearly teeth; his dark brown hair (almost black) waved in glossy curls around his high and open forehead; a nose inclined to aquiline, but in perfect conformity with his other features, and a smile of inexpressible sweetness animating his whole expressive countenance, presented to the observer a face almost, if not quite, faultless.

Henry was rather more robust in frame, and taller than his cousin. There was nothing



either very peculiar or attractive in his features, which, though regular, were not handsome ; there was also a look of melancholy thoughtfulness about him, save that from his dark hazel eyes there beamed an expression of kindness and benevolence. In character the two cousins were widely dissimilar.

Robert was all life, gaiety, and levity, and his heart unsusceptible of deep impressions ; of excitable and hasty temper when things went contrary to his wishes or expectations, but soon relapsing again into his usual happy mood. Fickle and fanciful in his attachments, which were never with him of a deep or lasting nature, he resembled a butterfly continually sipping and flitting from flower to flower.

The feelings of Henry were strong, though subdued ; yet his heart ever beat with every kind and generous impulse. His voice seldom gave utterance to the emotions passing within his breast, until called forth by some sudden emergency ; it was then that his countenance was lit up with brilliant radiance, and his words and actions

betokened the lofty bearings of a noble and high-spirited mind. He was firm and constant in his attachments; quick to forgive, and slow to resent injuries.

Such is an outline of the two youths who are sauntering down the avenue of the Old Manor House, and who will, in the following pages, speak for themselves.

We will now take a glance at the old Manor House itself, describe its outward and inward appearance, and see who and what was passing within its walls. The mansion was built in the Elizabethan style of architecture, of the only materials to be had in the neighbourhood, red bricks and flints; the original glare and colour of the former had been mellowed down by the hand of time, and now presented a dark and gloomy appearance in the outward walls. The entrance-hall was approached by a flight of steps; the hall itself being of large dimensions, with a good billiard-table standing in the centre, and from its old oak pannelled walls hung suspended the family portraits of many generations

past. On the left-hand side of the entrance was a well-proportioned dining-room ; on the right the library, containing a choice selection of books, many of them valuable from their great antiquity, as well as a large collection of modern authors. From the hall again, two folding doors gave entrance into a large and lofty saloon, fitted up with all the splendour and luxuries of past and modern inventions. From this you were introduced to the drawing-room, where I shall now in turn beg to introduce the members of the family to my readers.

Lord Barnard was of a very old family, who could date their pedigree from the Norman conquest. He had married early in life a lady of great beauty, as well as of high attainments, and had been blessed with a family of six children, but only one male heir to the family estates, who had entered the army, and was, when this tale commences, with his regiment.

Lord Barnard had just passed the meridian of life. His high and prominent forehead gave

evidence of deep intellectual faculties, which had been eminently conspicuous in a long parliamentary career. Tall and erect in stature, his movements were characterized by a dignified and graceful deportment, with the easy and polished manners of high breeding. Although rather extreme in politics, he was in social life a staunch friend, a constant and devoted husband, and a fond and affectionate father. Lady Barnard was—but how shall I describe her? No stroke of pen or pencil of mine can convey more than a faint outline of the bright and spotless original. She had now arrived at the prime of life, yet still retained the figure of youth. Her dark, lustrous eyes still sparkled with their usual brilliancy, and her soft, angelic countenance was yet unfurrowed by the hand of time. Her features bore the impress of a disposition and temper all gentleness and love, and there was something irresistibly attractive in the beautiful smile, which was ever ready to greet both friends and strangers.

To such a mother it were needless to say, her

children were most fervently attached. The two eldest daughters had now reached the age of womanhood, and the third was just entering her seventeenth year. Of the former, the eldest, though smaller in figure, resembled her mother in her dark eyes, and soft, expressive features. Gentle in manners and amiable in disposition, she possessed a heart ever beating with generous and benevolent feelings, unaffected by the cold and selfish manners of the world. The second, in features closely resembled her father, with a tall and good figure. She possessed also a great share of his abilities, was mistress of several languages, played and sang well, and although not strikingly handsome, was altogether most pleasing and attractive. Julia, the third, who had just emerged from the school-room, was in form and features one of the most beautiful girls ever beheld. She was rather above the general standard of women, but of exquisite symmetry; her features were of the Grecian cast, with dark, lustrous eyes, and luxuriant tresses of the raven hue. Her com-

plexion was of the brunette tint, with a rich colour mantling in her cheek. In manners and mien, graceful and fascinating ; in disposition, cheerful, gay, and warm-hearted. Such was Julia Bernard.

## CHAPTER II.

IN all his appointments, Lord Bernard was punctuality itself. Six o'clock was in those times the general dinner hour, and to the minute almost as the clock struck, and the last bell proclaiming the hour ceased ringing, the portly form of Mr. Smith, the butler, was seen at the drawing-room door, announcing that all was ready. It was an established rule of the house, that those who were present should immediately proceed to the dining-room, no consideration being given to late arrivals; and this being thoroughly understood in the neighbourhood, all the guests were generally assembled in the drawing-room by half-past five. A want of

punctuality being attended with the certain loss of fish and soup, induced all who esteemed a good dinner to arrive in good time.

Robert and Henry Howard, with their respected tutor, were honoured with invitations on this occasion, to them a great one, about thirty guests being expected. Among the company staying in the house, several were distinguished for great abilities as public men. Of these, Lord Erskine and the eccentric Dr. Crow (the Public Orator at the University of Oxford) were the most conspicuous. The latter had walked (his usual mode of travelling) thirty miles the preceding day, to be present at this gathering, which was to conclude with a tenant's ball in the evening. The Doctor's researches were not confined to books and literature only, but extended to the hidden things of the earth, geology, mineralogy, and conchology; and to assist him in these explorations, he always carried in his pocket a small hammer, with the aid of which he could pry into the interior of such stones and pebbles as excited his curiosity, when rambling



through the country ; and with such specimens his capacious pockets were usually filled. At the dinner-table political topics were generally excluded, as men of all creeds were equally invited, without reference to their public opinions ; and, with so good an example as our host, who abounded in anecdotes, wit, and good humour, the usual stiffness of a formal dinner party soon wore off, and hilarity began to circulate as freely as the champagne.

It was a true saying in the days of Horace, and holds good to the present, and will, I have no doubt, to all future generations of mankind, except perhaps in the Golden Age, when probably all may become teetotallers,—

*“Aperit vera precordia Bacchus.”*

The usual topics of the weather and season were discussed, amongst strangers a preliminary introduction to other subjects.

The Reverend Tutor, who had been placed next to Miss Tancred, a gay and lively girl of eighteen, then staying with the family, was questioned with rather more levity than he

thought consistent with his dignity, as to his late sport, with his dog and gun, and catechized upon sporting subjects generally. His short, though polite answers, only determined this mischievous girl to persevere in her attacks.

"Why, you appear ashamed of your pursuits, Mr. Meredith."

"Were they really my pursuits, I should be so; but they form with me only occasional recreation. My pursuits and avocations usually lie in a very different direction."

"Then, you think a clergyman should not be a regular sportsman?"

"Most certainly he should not; although I see no harm in his occasionally taking a stroll with his dog and gun, more for exercise, perhaps, than the love of sport."

"And if there is no *perhaps* in the case," inquired Miss Tancred, archly, "what then? He must get a dispensation from his Bishop, I suppose. But, as to angling, I conclude there can be no harm in that; and if we are to believe all a certain old Isaac Walton writes

on the subject, it must be the most innocent of all amusements, and perhaps the fish like to be played with as well. A sharp hook in one's lip must be a very delightful sensation, I should think."

"My dear young lady, do not be too severe upon us poor lords of the creation. In all things we offend continually; but let me remind you, which you are not perhaps aware of, (laying an emphasis on the word *perhaps*,) that the lips of a fish do not in the least resemble the lips of a young lady, either in appearance or sensibility. The hook we insert in a trout's leathern mouth causes him trifling pain, in comparison with the sharp arrows implanted in our soft hearts, by the pouting of those pretty lips."

"Oh! very soft indeed you gentlemen all are in your hearts; but I have an idea that your heads are much softer."

"Oh, fie! Miss Tancred."

"Well, who ever hears of a man breaking his heart, now-a-days?"

"Or a young lady either," replied Mr. Meredith.

"They have too much sense.—Well, Mr. Meredith, *à propos* of this evening, we are to have a Tenant's Ball. Do you approve of dancing?"

"Of course I do, in moderation, or I should scarcely have been present."

"You dance then, I conclude."

"Your conclusion is premature. I do not dance myself, although I derive pleasure from seeing young people enjoy themselves."

"Well, will you dance with me to-night?"

"And make myself a butt for you to laugh at? No, I must decline,\* although I admit the temptation is a great one."

"Well, only one quadrille?"

"Nay, my fair Eve, it must not be."

"Only one turn then, in a waltz."

"Horror of horrors! it would drive me crazy. You do not seriously mean to say that you are a waltzer?"

"Well, what if I am?"

The countenance of the kind-hearted tutor underwent a sudden change, and he looked

with a melancholy air upon his fair companion.

"I read your conclusion," she said, "in your eyes. I am fallen in your estimation. Is it not so?"

Mr. Meredith was silent.

"Tell me then, at least," she said, "your objection to waltzing; that in fairness you are bound to do."

"They may be only prejudices; but that I entertain strong opinions on the subject, I admit. The waltz is not an English dance, and it is productive of too much familiarity. You and I are not even upon those terms, although we have met before, to allow of the usual mode of greeting among acquaintances, that of shaking hands; and yet you would permit me, or a perfect stranger, perhaps merely introduced for the occasion, to embrace you with his arm and whirl you round and round in the giddy circle, until I have seen some young ladies almost fainting in their partner's arms; others with their heads reclining on their shoulders. It is a foreign fashion,

and to foreigners custom may have rendered it innocuous; but, our English maidens have ever been characterized by reserve of manners and modesty of deportment, and far, far distant be the day, when they may be taught to think so lightly of their own proper feelings, as to adopt manners and customs so much at variance with them."

"Bravo! Mr. John Bull—but you have not converted me, mind—I am no waltzer."

"Then why ask me to join in such a dance?"

"Merely to hear your opinions upon it;—mine have been decided long ago."

A radiant smile passed over the features of the kind-hearted Mr. Meredith, like a bright ray of the rising sun bursting through the dark mists of an autumnal morning, and again lit up his expressive countenance.

Old Dr. Crow had been delving deep below, and had fished up an unfortunate toad, which was found encased in a block of stone many feet below the surface of the earth, in some quarry near Oxford. He had been discussing

with another learned Theban, or Naturalist, the probabilities of how and when the said toad had obtained admission into its stony chamber ; and after various opinions had been given on both sides, and all kinds of conjectures hazarded upon the subject, the conclusion was finally come to, that the said toad had become imbedded in a calcareous substance of clay and sand, when a tadpole, about the date of the deluge, and that this said tadpole and this said substance had been growing on together ever since, until one had become a toad and the other a block of granite !

An aged colonel was rehearsing over again some of his exploits in the Peninsular War, his hair-breadth escapes in battle, and his almost miraculous preservation from a musket-ball on the plains of Waterloo, from the mischievous effects of which a large silver huntingwatch had saved him, which the ball had struck, and become there firmly imbedded.

With various discourse the dinner-hour passed pleasantly and cheerfully, and the dessert had now been placed on the table. At the bottom,

next to Lord Barnard, sat a Mr. Goodenough, a tall, stout-built man of about fifty. He was neither *fish* nor *fowl*; that is, neither exactly a gentleman nor a farmer, but a compound of both. Living in a sequestered part of the country, where the seats of country gentlemen seldom met the view of passing travellers, he had, from his business-like habits and thorough acquaintance with all rural and parochial matters, been raised to a seat on the bench of magistrates. Although a most useful member of society, he was not calculated to shine in polite circles, and far from being a lady's man (to which, to do him justice, he was himself perfectly aware he had no pretensions), he generally avoided their society.

With his cheerful and good-humoured host, however, he soon found himself at ease, and he was entertaining him with a long *rigmarole* story of some eccentric old farmer who lived in his neighbourhood, and was lately deceased. The narration of this story proceeded *pari passu*, with the cracking and grinding of a large quan-



tity of fine filberts with which he had piled up his plate. While this process was going on, his articulation was anything but distinct, his cheeks resembling those of a certain blue-nosed tailless baboon, which probably some of my readers may recollect to have seen in the Zoological Gardens, stowing away, with inconceivable dispatch, apples, cakes, and nuts in his capacious maw, and still looking out for more, much to the surprise of the donors. This mumbling, grumbling noise (for conversation it cannot be called), continued as long as the filberts lasted ; when his mouth being cleared out for another demand upon the dish, which had been slyly removed by Robert Howard to a situation in nearer proximity to his own plate (being himself much addicted to the pleasant amusement of nut-cracking also), gave him the opportunity of finishing his story after the following fashion :

“ And so, my lord, you see, as I was telling you about this queer old fish, Farmer Giles, he was about the rummest old Turk I ever met with ; he lived there all by himself in that lonely

farm-house, with his old hag of a housekeeper—wouldn't have any of his neveys or nieces to come and see him, for fear of their eating up his grub."

At this particular part of the story, conversation had by some unaccountable accident (as it will so happen sometimes) come to a dead halt all round the table; there was, in fact, a momentary silence when these words struck the ears of all assembled, and Robert Howard, ever ready for mischief and fun, began to titter; another followed, and another. Laughing, like yawning, is catching; Lord Barnard could scarcely resist it, and added, "Capital joke, Goodenough, by Jove!"

"I can't see it, my lord," replied the pertinacious and obtuse Goodenough; "and I'll be bound the old boy didn't see any fun in it, either."

Roars of laughter now issued from nearly all the male portion of the guests, and the ladies were obliged to apply their handkerchiefs to their mouths. Dr. Crowe and the aged colonel

alone possessed their gravity, and tried, by their severe looks, to restore order, but without avail. The mischievous Robert was resolved to keep the ball going, and at every pause rekindled the flame by his shrill cachinnations, until Lady Barnard, witnessing the distressed state of some of the ladies, made a precipitate retreat from the dining-room.

## CHAPTER III.

AFTER the retreat of the ladies, Goodenough, with half-a-dozen votaries of Bacchus, settled themselves down in close proximity to Lord Barnard, fully intent on dispatching a bottle of claret at least per head at their ease, and to enjoy without interruption the usual amount of after-dinner jocularities. The more youthful and aged part of the company, who preferred the society of the softer sex, gradually disappeared from their seats, leaving Lord Barnard closely besieged by Goodenough and a few staunch supporters, to whom all hints of joining the ladies were as music to the deaf adder. Lord Barnard at last began almost to lose his usual

serenity of temper with these seemingly-determined fixtures, saying he was sorry to disturb them, but that the room would be wanted for laying out the supper. Goodenough capitulated upon the condition of one more bottle of claret, which was accordingly ordered.

By this time the company had nearly all assembled in the drawing-rooms and saloon, which were thrown open on this occasion and brilliantly lighted up; and after refreshments had been handed round, an adjournment was made to the hall, which was gaily decorated as a ball-room, and the old oak floor enlivened with various devices in chalk.

The tenantry, who had in the meanwhile been amply refreshed in the housekeeper's-room, were now ushered in at the side door by the portly butler, and several of them presented to the lady of the mansion, to whom, although personally strangers, their names were familiar; and by the kind and affable manners of their highly-respected hostess, they soon found themselves considerably relieved from the *gaucherie*

and embarrassment consequent upon this their first introduction to polite society.

The best available band having been engaged from a neighbouring large market town, now struck up the lively air of "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning;" upon which the usual preliminaries of bowing and scraping on the introduction of partners commenced, and the entire length of the old hall was quickly occupied by *vis-à-vis* for the first country dance, Lord Barnard leading off with a buxom farmer's wife of about his own age. Several young gentlemen, who had come fully prepared to make themselves as agreeable as possible to the fair ladies of the mansion, were not a little disappointed at being refused the honour of their hands, which were bestowed upon the tenants for the first dance; but this being a tenants' ball, such an arrangement was of course most fitting.

Robert Howard, who had been perfectly fascinated by the dazzling beauty of Julia, and had seized the earliest opportunity of trying to engage

her for the first dance, was not a little chagrined at the failure of this his maiden suit.

“Why, Miss Julia,” exclaimed he, rather pettishly, “do you prefer dancing with that young boor to me?”

“I suppose, sir, I may choose my partners without consulting you first?”

“Oh! undoubtedly,” replied Robert, with the most profound bow; “young ladies are privileged to exhibit their *penchant* or caprice in any manner they please.”

“And school-boys their impertinence, I conclude, if I am to judge by you.”

Robert was exceedingly nettled by this retort, and drawing himself haughtily up, exclaimed, “I shall not be a schoolboy much longer,” and turned hastily off to seek another partner. Not being troubled with *mauvaise honte*, our youthful Adonis soon obtained the hand of one of the prettiest girls in the room, without the aid of a formal introduction, with whom he quickly returned, occupying the place of next couple to the offended Julia.

Young Howard, all life and animation, his handsome countenance lit up with unusual brilliancy, and with the settled resolution of making himself more than usually agreeable to his fair companion, presented a strong contrast to Julia's sombre and abashed partner, who stood mute and almost trembling by his side. During the intervals of the dance, Robert crossed over, chatting and laughing with his partner, at the grotesque appearance of the young bear, as he called him, on the other side, his remarks being purposely loud enough to be overheard by the fair Julia, who, although exceedingly mortified, yet bore it all with apparent good humour.

The *contré danse* being over, a quadrille was next called for, in which the company became more select, and a finer opportunity presented itself for Robert to display his graceful movements as a well-practised dancer; and it must be confessed many beautiful eyes were attracted towards his performances and handsome person, of which he appeared totally unconscious in the



excitement of the dance and music. There being an undue preponderance of gentlemen over ladies, Harry Howard had, with his usual retiring habits, taken his seat close to an old farmer, whose acquaintance he had made on a shooting excursion. The quadrille being ended, a waltz was next played, and a few couples only appeared in the magic circle.

“Well, Farmer Sampson,” exclaimed Harry, “how do you like that sort of dancing?”

“Not much after my notion of doing things, sir, although it may suit you gentlefolks. I don’t like it, sir, at all—can’t abide the sight of it. Them Frenchified manners don’t suit my humour. All very well for the Mounseers t’other side of the water; but dang it all! to see our young ladies pulled and hauled about in that ’ere fashion—’tis not right, young gentleman, sorry old Thomas Sampson should be obliged to say so—but it is not right, sir, and that’s the long and short of the matter, if I was to offend her ladyship by saying so. I can’t help it, I do not like to see it, and won’t—there!”

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Sampson, neither do I approve of it."

"You don't?—you be'ant in earnest, though?"

"I am, Farmer — from my heart I detest waltzing."

"You do—then give us your hand, young gentleman, I'm glad to hear you say that—and now, if you'll help an old man, who's a cripple, to toddle away from the sight of more of this, you'll be doing me a great favour. I be as hot as if I'd been threshing an hour in our barn with Job Williams, and want summat to cool me a little. I say, young gentleman, can you tell me how I can get a draught of Mr. Smith's home brewed? the stuff in those little glasses don't suit my stomach. I want to have a pull at a quart cup of good October."

"And so you shall, Farmer; come along—I know the road."

The old man, leaning on the arm of his slight companion, was now wending his way slowly through the crowd, and in passing near where Lady Barnard was sitting, her attention was

directed towards the pair, when catching the eye of Harry Howard, she beckoned them to approach.

“ Her Ladyship wishes to speak to you,” whispered Henry Howard, “ and we must pay our respects to her in passing.”

As the venerable old man approached her, Lady Barnard, although herself an invalid, and unable to walk without assistance, partly rose from the cushion on which she was reclining, and tendering her hand, kindly greeted her patriarchal tenant.

“ Well, my worthy old friend, I am so glad to see you have been able to attend this little dance of ours, and I hope you have been entertained.”

“ Thank you, kindly, my Leddy, I am but a poor old cripple still, as you may see ; but this night the music and all do cheer me up, and I feel the better for it already.”

“ I am delighted to hear you say so ; you must make yourself at home, and ask for what you want.”

"Thank you, my Leddy, for all your kindnesses."

On saying which, he was dragged away by Harry to a side door, which communicated by a back passage with the dining room, where a most substantial supper had been laid out.

"Odds bobbs!" exclaimed old Samson, on witnessing this goodly display of creature comforts, "why, here's a Lord Mayor's feast, all the world over; we mau'n't touch them fine things, though, before the great folks have had their turn first."

"Nonsense, my old friend! sit you down in that arm chair, and think yourself at home for at least half an hour, as no one will interrupt you for that time at least, and now here goes for the quart of home-brewed first;" saying which, Henry Howard gave a strong pull at the bell rope, upon which rattling summons Mr Smith's portly frame quickly appeared.

"Oh, Mr. Smith, is it you?—just the man I wanted to see. Mr. Samson here is longing for a draught of your double XX home-brewed ale."

"He shall have it, sir, in a minute. Sit down, Mr. Samson, and make yourself comfortable, and here's a little table all to yourself," placing one by his side.

"But what would my Lord say, to see me in his own arm chair taking such liberties?"

"Just this, Mr. Samson. 'Smith,' he would say, 'you have done right, make every one as happy as you can.' That's my Lord's humour, and you ought to know him by this time as well as myself, Mr. Samson."

Leaving the old farmer to the enjoyment of his tankard of ale and a slice or two of cold beef, we may peep into the ball-room again.

Robert Howard and his chum, Dick Darel, are scanning the movements of the waltzers, when Dick, espying his tutor's better half sitting down, suddenly exclaimed, "By Jove! Bob, I'll go and ask her to have a turn, she looks so handsome to-night."

"And get a broken head for your pains, Dick."

"How so?"

"Why I heard Meredith say, just now, if his

wife was to suffer herself to be whirled about in that fashion, he would cut her legs off, and break the head of any puppy who should be her partner."

"Oh, well, I'm glad you told me how the wind sits in that quarter. I'll have a shy at that girl in the pink dress, then, instead; so come along, Bob, and get a partner."

"No; I'm tired of dancing, and disgusted—"

"Eh? what's the matter, Bob? you tired of dancing—come, that won't do. But tell me, what's put you out of sorts—honour bright, I won't peach."

"Well, then, I've made a fool of myself, and quarrelled with the prettiest girl in the room, who is now dancing with that longlegged fellow in uniform. Confound him! I'll pick a quarrel with that fellow, and have him out."

"And be expelled the school just as you are ready for Oxford—that would be making a pretty hash of it. No, no, Bob, that cock must not fight with you at any rate; but seriously,

you can't be in love again already—what's become of Mary Brown?"

"Mary Brown be hanged! she is only fit to be lady's maid to that angel before you."

"Ah, Bob! the old story, I suppose. 'I've danced and I've prattled with fifty fair maids,' and kissed them as oft——"

"Stop that nonsense, Dick; I'm not in the humour now for foolery."

"Oh, very well, a desperate fit I see—but of course it's reciprocal? Well, now to set things straight, I'll go and ask her for the next quadrille, and speak a good word for you."

"No, Dick, that won't do for me; a friend in need may be a friend indeed; but there is another old saying, equally true, 'Two of a trade never agree;' and it's more than probable you would be speaking two words for yourself, before one for me. That's *my* game, so no poaching. Keep to your pink, and leave me the blue. Richard's himself again—and off to the rescue. Adieu!" saying which, Bob again mixed in the throng.

“ Well,” soliloquized Robert, “ faint heart never won fair lady. I have made a fool of myself, that’s clear enough ; but the *amende honorable* must be made, or my chance is out.”

The waltzers now ceased, and the fair Julia was conducted to her seat by her gallant partner, whose bow having been made, an opening presented itself to the crest-fallen Robert. Sobered, though not abashed, he again approached his lady-love, and in the most quiet and gentlemanly manner, requested the honour of her hand for the next dance.

“ For that I am engaged, Mr. Howard.”

“ Will you allow me, then, to request the same favour for the following one ?”

“ For that also I am engaged.”

The blood rushed like lightning to the temples of Robert Howard, suffusing his forehead with a crimson hue, and for a moment he stood motionless, struck mute with confusion at what he thought nothing less than an intended insult, a death-blow to his most sanguine hopes. Soon, however, his natural hauteur resumed its



ascendency, even in spite of other conflicting emotions, and bowing, he sadly replied—

“I am justly punished;” and was moving slowly away, when the beautiful, though offended girl, with a true woman’s feelings, pitying the desponding look of her retreating admirer, suddenly exclaimed,

“Stay, Mr. Howard, I have made a mistake ; I am engaged for the next quadrille, but should a country dance be called instead, I have no partner for that.”

The animated smile which as suddenly lit up his handsome features, must have repaid her for this kind concession. His hand was almost involuntarily held out, and gently pressed by hers. It was the impulse of the moment only, of two young and fervent hearts almost unconscious of the action.

“A thousand thanks !” he exclaimed, in rapture ; “then you do forgive me for my rudeness ?”

At this moment a quadrille tune struck up, and as quickly struck down the spirits of Robert Howard. His fair Julia was led off on

another's arm. It was enough, however, she had forgiven him.

Love has been portrayed as a passion. It may be so in its general acceptation—but first-love is of a much more exalted nature—a heaven-born and holy instinct, implanted in the hearts of our first parents, as God's precious gift, when walking in innocence in the garden of Eden. It is pure almost as the love of angels, without any mixture of the grosser compounds of mortality. The object of our first affections may be sometimes invested with ideal perfections by the fond imagination of the worshipper, before which our otherwise keen perceptions are darkened. We sit entranced, enthralled before this image of our own creation, and our fancy is raised in proportion, and partakes of a loftier flight, uncontaminated by the grosser feelings of passion. What then, it may be asked, are the beauties of mind and person in the female character all ideal?—Assuredly not. Perfection cannot be attained by human nature, but the nearest approach to it is found in woman. Man

will betray his friend, or his own mother's son, and leave him to perish, uncared for and unassisted—but what will not woman do and dare for those she loves? Selfishness is to her unknown. In health and prosperity, man's cheerful companion; in adversity, his stedfast friend; in sorrow and sickness, his comforter; in disgrace even, and death, his unflinching supporter. Such is the love of woman!

Robert Howard had never beheld any one half so captivating as Julia Barnard, and his whole thoughts and feelings were at once concentrated in ardent and uncontrolled admiration of her surpassing beauty. His eyes followed her mechanically wherever she moved, with a pang of intense jealousy for every smile bestowed upon her more fortunate partner; and whilst thus occupied, Henry Howard approached him, saying—

“Why are you not dancing, Robert?”

Without diverting his attention, he replied,

“I may ask you the same question, and what is *your* answer?”

“ A very simple one—I cannot get a partner ; all are engaged two or three deep ; in fact, I consider schoolboys at a discount to-night, when there are so many young men, and two to one in proportion to the ladies.”


“ Well, then, I suppose one answer will do for both.”

“ Why, not exactly, as you are such a favourite with the fair sex, and generally find partners.”

It is needless to repeat more of the sayings and doings at the tenants’ ball, which was kept up with great spirit until the grey dawn appeared in the east, when all departed well pleased with their night’s entertainment.

On the afternoon of the same day, Robert and Henry made their call at the Manor House, to enquire after the welfare of the ladies. They were at once admitted to pay their respects to Lady Barnard, with whom they had become great favourites, and had received *carte blanche* to dine at the Manor House whenever they could obtain the consent of their tutor. From this time an intimacy sprung up between the

young people, and the two youths became as familiarized in this amiable family as in their own home. The attentions of Robert to the fair Julia did not escape the notice of Lady Barnard, neither did she disapprove of them, as he had by his winning manners and handsome person ingratiated himself completely in her favour.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE period for Robert and Henry leaving the roof of their kind-hearted tutor having now arrived, they paid their last melancholy adieus to the fair inmates of the old Manor House, and set off for Oxford. The night before their departure, however, Robert taxed his poetic fancy in composing a farewell address to his lady-love, vowing eternal constancy, &c. &c., depositing the letter on a small table which stood in the arbour of the garden, the favourite resort of his beloved.

No power of the magician's wand can cause a greater metamorphosis than that effected by the stroke of the pen, which transforms a school-

boy into a man, by enrolling his name on the books of Alma Mater. Arrayed in the academical cap and gown, the young novitiate feels, or rather fancies himself, at once a being of some importance, and assumes the air and dignified deportment of the man. Boyish pastimes are laid aside, and a restraint imposed upon his actions and feelings, which at first sits awkwardly ; but habit soon reconciles him to the change. That change, however, is greater in appearance than in reality. The passions, disposition, and feelings of the boy, still retain their hold over the man, although checked and disguised before the public eye, which he now believes fixed upon him. The first lesson in deception has been taught, and the natural impulse of the heart, whether for good or evil, must be suppressed or restrained.

There cannot be a greater contrast than that apparent to every careful observer, in the boisterous, cheerful, and light-hearted buoyancy of spirits, the general characteristics of a school-boy, and the quiet, stiff, and formal demeanour

of the Oxford man. At school, boys quickly become acquainted with each other in a very unceremonious manner ; but the case is reversed at college. There, a formal introduction is indispensable. Men meet in chapel, at lectures, and at the dinner-table, without a word being exchanged between those occupying adjacent seats ; and this reserve will continue for weeks, months, and even years, without any acquaintance springing up, as it does in common life.

There is a story told of an Oxford man, who, standing on the bank of the Isis, whilst another was struggling in the river, was heard to exclaim,—“ Oh ! I wish I had been introduced to that fellow ; I could have saved his life.” The picture may be a little overcharged, but it bears a very strong resemblance to original life at Oxford. Much has been said and written lately, both for and against the system of supervision and fagging exercised in public schools by senior boys over their juniors, and it may not therefore be out of place to relate the results of my own experience in such matters.



At ten years of age, I was sent to a large, though not what is called generally, a public school. It was, however, conducted precisely upon the same principles. There were two head masters and an usher ; and the elder boys of the first form were deputed to superintend the juniors. Fagging, although not permitted, was nevertheless carried on to a great extent ; but certainly without the knowledge, much less the sanction of the masters : in fact, the system was so well organised, and the penalties attached to telling out of school so severe, that I never knew an instance of one boy betraying another, even his most merciless tormentor.

Upon entering the school, my fate was to be handed over to the tender mercies of one of the greatest brutes and tyrants that ever disgraced the human form. His disposition was perfectly fiend-like, taking the greatest delight in witnessing the pain he could inflict upon his unhappy fag, and absolutely gloating over his cries. As a sample of his cruelty, I may mention one or two little punishments, which afforded him in-

effable pleasure. One was, to whip me along, on the sharp flinty road behind the church (where we were screened from view), upon my bare feet, until the blood spirted out. If I ventured to cry out, he would then seize me by the throat with both his hands, and tighten his hold, until I fell nearly suffocated on the ground. Another favourite amusement was to hammer me on what is called "the funny bone" of my elbow, until my arm became paralyzed. There was also one other torture, too horrible to mention, to which I was occasionally subjected, the pain of which was so intense that I fainted. These cruelties were inflicted, be it remembered, not as a punishment for any fault, or on account of disobedience to his orders, but simply to gratify his refined taste for cruelty.

The punishment awarded to other little boys, who had the ill luck to fall under the displeasure of this monster, were of a similar character. There was on the south side of the churchyard a large tomb, the cover of which being of one single slab, had been made to move aside; and

into this dungeon I have seen a helpless little boy thrown, notwithstanding all his imploring looks and cries for mercy, and the slab pushed back again to its place, a small aperture only being left to admit air. Another boy was suspended from some high iron railing, to which his arms and legs were tied by pieces of rope, with a cord also round his neck, and in this situation being left, he would most assuredly have been strangled but for the fortunate arrival of the usher on the spot, who cut him down just in time, as he had already become black in the face; but nothing would induce this boy to divulge the name of his persecutor.

It is needless to recount other acts of cruelty inflicted by this brute, who being of very demure countenance, and exceedingly clever at his lessons, was a great favourite of all the masters, who little dreamt of his savage propensities. To the great joy of all the little boys, their tormentor was removed to Oxford, where he was no less distinguished for his talents than for his vicious course of life.

At a large wine party in his college, having had the audacity to propose a most blasphemous toast, he was by universal acclamation seized and thrown out of the window on the grass-plot below ; and the last intelligence received of this *mauvais sujet* was, that after leaving the university he had settled in London, and rapidly descending from bad to worse, was at last chosen president of a conclave of pickpockets, who held their rendezvous in a low, underground cellar, where the knives and forks were chained to the table. How true is the saying, "*facilis descensus averni.*"

It was my good fortune, after the departure of my persecutor, to become the slave of one exactly the opposite in character to my first master. He was good-tempered and kind-hearted, rewarding me plentifully with cakes, tarts, and money also, for my services, which were of a much more agreeable nature, although attended with considerable risk. Charles Lovebourne was between nineteen and twenty years of age, a fine-looking, handsome young fellow,

a great favourite with the fair sex, and at this time engaged in carrying on a *liaison* with a very pretty school-girl, whose play-grounds adjoined ours.

My chief employment consisted in carrying *billets doux* between the lovers; and when appointments were made for their meeting, mine was the office to act as sentinel, and give notice of the approach of any intruder. This, at certain times, was a very hazardous business, when their assignations happened to be made out of school bounds, where, if caught, a flogging certainly awaited me. Their most favourite place of meeting, however, was in an arbour at the bottom of the garden, over which hung the boughs of a large pear-tree; and here, perched up aloft in the fork of the tree, as soon as the shades of evening began to fall, was it my privilege to keep watch over the beauties below—no very enviable situation, when a cold east wind was blowing in my teeth. Almost every situation has, however, some recommendation,—so had mine. Being under the protection of the

senior boy in the school, no other dare fag or even touch me, so jealous was my master of his slave; neither were there wanting my best endeavours to please both him and his fair mistress also, for which I was handsomely rewarded in more ways than one.

But the life I then led was an unnatural one for a boy of my age. When school hours were over I could not join in the usual routine of the school-boy games, such as cricket, football, fives, &c.; for indulging in such pastimes an opportunity was very seldom presented to me, employment of a very different kind being provided for my leisure hours. This fagging system was at last exploded by a delicate little boy who had been sent home very ill from the school, in consequence of harsh treatment by one of the seniors. This poor little fellow, when safe in his mother's arms, made a full confession of the cruel usage he had experienced, upon her promising that he should not be sent back again. The consequence, of course, was, that this lady wrote a very full and particular account of these

disgraceful proceedings to the head master, who was not a little astonished to find, upon a searching examination being made into the matter, that such a well-organized system should have been carried on such a length of time in his own establishment, without his knowledge or permission.

From that time a complete stop was put to such practices. The masters, being deeply interested in the welfare of the school, exercised the greatest vigilance in the suppression of fagging, and the usher, during play hours, also was ever on the watch ; in short, a perfect Argus, to protect the little boys from any further oppression. This Hydra-headed monster was thus for ever crushed in our school, which very soon attained the highest state of good order, and its character for sound education stood so high at the University, as to prove a passport of admittance there, without the preliminary examination by the tutors of the colleges.

In these enlightened and philanthropic days, when undue severity cannot be exercised with

impunity even towards those who have justly forfeited all claim to sympathy by their offences against the laws of their country, it is only reasonable to expect that a system so antagonistic to our deeply-rooted love of liberty, the birthright of every Englishman, should meet with almost universal condemnation. This system of fagging or tyrannizing over the junior boys at our public schools is productive of so much mischief, both in a moral and physical point of view, that it will and must be done away with. It is idle to attempt to produce one single argument in its defence.





## CHAPTER V.

FROM this digression we will take up the thread of our narrative, and relate how it fared with Robert and Henry Howard upon their introduction into Oxford life. The college at which they had entered, formed a very conspicuous object in the High Street, to which a large flight of steps descended from the first or outer quadrangle. This building was evidently of more recent erection than the inner one, whose dark-coloured weather-worn walls betokened great antiquity. The rooms also bore a very different appearance in point of height and dimensions, being both small and low, and some of those on the ground-floor little better than

dungeons, into which the cheering rays of the sun seldom, if ever, could gain admittance.

At that time the colleges being very full, it was the ill luck of our two young freshmen to be installed in some of the most wretched apartments that could possibly have been selected to damp the ardour of *academical pursuits*.

On a dark, dismal day in November, the coach at the Mitre set them down, where they met their friend in his cap and gown, and then marched off to college, where everything had been prepared by their assiduous scout or servant for their reception, which could be procured from the buttery hatch. The fare provided, however, was of very homely description, consisting of some little round loaves, butter, and two plates of cold boiled beef, with a tankard of ale, this being the usual allowance, or, as they were called in college parlance, *commons*. The rations in many of the large colleges at that date served out to commoners were not of a very extravagant order. At breakfast, two small penny loaves, with a pat of butter. For dinner,

a plate of cut meat (no joint being permitted to appear on a commoner's table), with a penny loaf and a quart of beer; and for supper, cold meat again, and another little round loaf. Tea, sugar, and other luxuries, were to be provided out of the student's own pocket. At the High Table, however, where sat the Dons or Fellows in royal state, an aldermanic feast smoked upon the board, every delicacy of the season being served up for their entertainment, with wines of the choicest vintage.

It must be conceded, that the college at which the two Howards had been admitted did not rank very high in public estimation; but the crowded state of others more fashionable, constrained them to enter there, or remain another twelvemonth with their tutor; but with a handsome allowance, and an extensive acquaintance in other colleges, they were prepared to make themselves as comfortable as circumstances would admit of.

Collegians have, however, a few other things to learn besides Latin and Greek, and at college

the first lessons are often taught them in domestic economy also. They must of necessity make their own coffee, toast their own bread, and boil their eggs. A scene of this sort has been very humourously described by the late Thomas Haynes Bailey, when breakfasting with a college acquaintance :—

“ My friend all the time was on his legs,  
Now baking the toast, now boiling the eggs ;  
From table to fire-place running about,  
Now scalding his fingers, now blaming the scout.”

To those who have just escaped from the restraints of school, college life is in comparison a life of freedom ; although here also there are certain rules and regulations, which must be complied with.

From the hour of seven till half-past eight in the morning, according to the season of the year, the tinkling of the college bells is heard throughout the University, summoning the students to chapel. The general breakfast hour is nine o'clock, after which, certain lectures given by the tutors of the respective colleges

must be attended ; each lecture lasting an hour. The dinner hour is about four o'clock in the afternoon, with which terminates the business of the day. An adjournment is then made to their respective rooms, where the students enjoy their "Otium cum dignitate, or sine dignitate" over their wine and dessert. Here the grand *ré-unions* take place, and very great displays are often made at these wine parties. Ices, jellies, and confectionary, and all the fruits of the season, adorn the table in great profusion. In by-gone times, the feast of reason and the flow of soul continued without interruption until the sound of the evening bell gave notice that it was time to retire to the ladies, or rather the chapel, as the old song runs.

"The soul of man shall leave his can,  
When he hears the mighty Tom," &c.—

a name given to the large bell of Christ Church, which always rings at nine o'clock, after which hour, the college gates are closed for the night, and no egress allowed to any but out-college

men. When the front college gates are closed, admission can only be obtained at the porter's lodge, who keeps a book, in which all the names of those are registered who return late to college, with the hour also at which they are let in ; and those who are known to keep late hours are admonished first ; and this failing in the desired effect, upon a repetition of the offence, subjected to various pains and penalties. A fee to the janitor, however, has its usual effect, and a silver key will often unlock the door at any hour of the night or morning, without any entry in the log. The officials, although all servants of the college, and holding their appointments under the heads of houses or fellows, seldom betray their young masters, from whom, independent of their regular pay, they receive many gratuities, and derive also very considerable perquisites.

It is the business of a single servant or scout to wait upon several students, clean their rooms, make their beds, and prepare their breakfast, and all this is done with a precision and celerity almost marvellous. These men are of course

obliged to work early and late ; but it does not take more than ten minutes for an active man, quite *au fait* at his business, to lay the cloth, light the fire, and set the room to rights, unless there has been a wine or supper party the previous night.

Those whose allowance would admit of it, were also permitted to keep their own servant to wait upon them ; but this indulgence was not generally approved of by the dons. Upon a freshman entering a college, he is, if unacquainted with any of the junior members, generally introduced by one of the tutors to some of his favourites, one or other of whom makes a point of inviting him to a wine party, at which a more general introduction takes place, and he is then fairly launched on college life, and left to form his own coterie of select friends. Upon the choice then made, depends very much the weal or woe of every man's future existence.

In a few days, the two freshmen, as they were called, were invited to a large wine party given by a fellow-collegian, who, taken by their

appearance, thought to obtain credit by their introduction to his particular set of friends (the majority of whom were of the jovial order), as well as some benefit to himself. The host, on this occasion, was John Redman, already in ideas and practice a man of the world—facetious, affable, and good-humoured, with ready wit and tact sufficient to ensnare the unwary and blind the unsuspecting. Having himself only very limited means, just sufficient to enable him to complete his college education, which was to be the passport to his future advancement in after-life, he was the first to ingratiate himself into the good opinion of any freshman whose acquaintance he thought might be turned to some better account hereafter; and having learnt that the young Howards were of good fortune, family, and connections, he resolved to secure their friendship, by introducing them to his own particular set, and giving a grand *fête* in honour of their introduction to college life.

No Mentor could be more plausible, or apparently more solicitous about the welfare of his



protégées. He cautioned them about taking more wine than they liked (as men at that time were given to hard drinking), concluding with many similar pieces of advice on other points upon which they might be assailed, thus securing their good opinion of his friendly intentions towards them.

This party being intended to be on a grand scale, invitations were accordingly sent out a few days previously, in anticipation of the event, and every preparation made to give *éclat* to it; and old John Thatcher, the scout, summoned to a private rehearsal in Mr. Redman's sitting-room, the nature of which will transpire from the following colloquy.

The scene opens with Mr. Redman sitting over the fire in a *brown study*, with his feet upon the fender—a knock at the door—"Come in," in a loud voice.

Enter old John, bowing obsequiously.

REDMAN.—"Where hast thou been, thou old curmudgeon, when I told you to be in my rooms an hour ago?"

"Is, sir," his usual way of pronouncing yes.

"Confound you, for an old knave! is that any answer to my question? Why have you kept me waiting here an hour at least?"

"Is, sir."

"By Jove, I've a mind to send you head foremost down stairs."

"Is, sir."

"Where have you been, I say?"

"Mr. Smith's rooms, sir."

"Large party, there?"

"Is, sir—couldn't come before, sir—Is, sir."

"Now hold your tongue, then, and listen to what I say."

"Is, sir."

"I am going to give a large party, too, on Friday."

"Is, sir."

"I am going to have a large wine party. From twenty to thirty."

"Is, sir."

"Now, John, mind what I am telling you. Everything must be done in first-rate style."

"Is, sir."

"Go to Jubbers, the pastrycook, and tell him I have some young Freshmen coming, with plenty of money, and I'll introduce them to him, if he sends me a first-rate spread. Do you understand?"

"Is, sir."

"Then to Simms, the wine merchant—same story, John, to send the best wine he has in his cellar."

"Is, sir."

"Now be off, and don't forget."

John hesitating.

"Well, what is it, John?"

"Plates, sir—knives and forks, sir—Is, sir."

"Well, how many are there left?"

"Not a dozen, sir—nearly all broken. Three tea-cups, and only half-a-dozen coffee-cups, and no saucers. Two decanters, sir, one with his neck cracked—all nearly smashed, sir, at that last wine party, by Mr. Patrick Phelan, sir, when he shied his cap across the table, sir—Is, sir."

"Borrow, John—borrow, borrow, and mind you borrow enough."

"Is, sir."—Exit John Thatcher on his hopeful errand.

The outlay in setting up a Freshman in college housekeeping amounts to a considerable sum when everything is ordered new from the different tradesmen, but after the first twelve-month few traces remain of the original patterns of either glass or crockery ware. Those, however, who have friends at college, or have been otherwise let behind the scenes, pursue a different course, and a much more economical one, by buying second-hand of the scouts sufficient of these articles for their own particular use, and borrowing afterwards, through the same channel, as occasion may require.

We will draw a veil over the wine party which ensued, as the sayings and doings of Bacchanalians are little fitted for ears polite ; suffice to say, that this said conclave continued its sitting until a very late hour, when grilled bones, anchovy toast, and such little stimulants, gave the finish-

ing stroke to those who could still hold out, or hold on to the table.

Robert Howard was one of the last to quit the festive scene ; and having enlivened the company with a few choice songs, he obtained the approbation of his host, who pronounced him a capital fellow, and one of the right sort. Henry, seeing how matters were likely to terminate, absented himself as early as consistent with etiquette, for which he was denounced a spooney.

The following day, Robert awoke with a splitting headache, as a matter of course, and a considerable quantity of soda-water was required to neutralize the effects of the fiery potations of the previous night.

The penalty of keeping bad company was visited also up on Harry, in a manner rather startling to a Freshman. Upon rising and look-out of window the next morning, he was not a little surprised and horrified to see one of his own chairs sticking on the top of the college lamp, which stood immediately under, an inte-

resting, if not amusing spectacle to all beholders, dean and tutors included, who were just returning from chapel. Whilst musing and meditating on this unpleasant phenomenon, a smart rap at the door attracted his attention in that direction. The porter made his appearance, with a polite message from the Dean, requesting Mr. Howard, junior's, presence in his rooms, with the least possible delay.

Before Harry could recover from his surprise, the porter had vanished, and another visitor, very unceremoniously entered (evidently in hot haste) who was no other than his new acquaintance of the previous evening—Pat Phelan.

“By the powers !” he exclaimed ; “it’s a fine scrape I’m likely to be in anyway just now, with that little sneaking devil of a porter on the scent.”

“Why, what’s the matter, Mr. Phelan ?” enquired Harry.

“Oh ! botheration, don’t Mr. Phelan me, my dear boy ; for if you don’t stand my friend at this point, it’s all over with Pat Phelan’s university

education—the third time pays for all—and I'm a mighty favourite with all the dons already, ill luck to them !”

“ Will you explain yourself ?” asked Harry.

“ Oh, to be sure. Those grilled bones, with a trifling drop of *eau de vie*, finished the business for me last night, and put mischief enough and to spare into Pat Phelan's head. I tried first, to draw you, my boy, from your crib, and finding that would not do, I just turned your sitting-room topsy turvy, and threw some of the chairs out of window ; and, as ill luck would have it, the leg of one just made a hole in the top of the lamp, where it now sticks, and be hanged to it. Well, that's bad enough ; but as the power of mischief was over me quite entirely, I just let fly with one of my pop-guns at that white-faced spooney opposite, who was poring over his books as usual, with the midnight oil burning, and the ball just passed over his head and lodged in the wall behind him. The fellow swears some men tried to murder him, and suspicion rests on me ; although it's well known

Pat Phelan can snuff a candle without touching the wax. But just to jump to the conclusion at once. The dons think the shot was fired from your rooms, and there sticks the chair as evidence that some madcap like Pat Phelan was there, or thereabouts. The porter I have just passed on the stairs ; so, taking all together, if you split—a trip into the country is the certain consequence. In sober seriousness—I am a ruined man,—for my father, having a large family, is barely able to support me at the university, and all my hopes in after-life depend upon my taking my degree.”

Harry stood for a while, hesitating what course to pursue, his father’s last injunctions passing quickly through his mind ; but with a well-grounded dread of displeasing his ever kind-hearted parent, he well knew also his father’s generous disposition, and at last resolved to act, as he thought he would have done, under the same circumstances.

“Phelan,” he said, “your secret is safe with me, on one condition, that you give me your



word of honour you will never fire another pistol shot within these college walls."

"That," said Phelan, "I most willingly and cheerfully engage."

"Very well—the rest remains with me, and I must be off to see the Dean."

"But, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Pat, "how will you get out of the confounded mess I have brought you into?"

"Simply by speaking the truth—but on one point I am resolved not to say one word."

"Then, you will be rusticated."

"So be it—my promise has been given. You, at least, are safe;" saying which, he snatched up his cap and gown, and turned down stairs. A short walk across the quadrangle brought Harry to the Dean's door, to which a small brass knocker was attached, the said appendage being an exception to the general doors of the college. With trembling hand, two or three faint taps were given, in response to which a soft, mellifluous voice from within, answered, "Come in." Cap in hand, Harry made his *entrée* with a low

bow, saying he had presented himself in obedience to a message from the porter.

Being invited to take a seat, the Dean thus commenced his dreaded oration :—

“ I have sent for you, Mr. Howard, in consequence of its having been reported to me, that a most riotous party assembled in your rooms last evening, and that a very serious outrage has been perpetrated against one of the junior members of the college, which might have been attended with fatal consequences—a pistol-ball was fired from your room window (such is my information), which passed immediately over the head of Mr. Plodder, who was reading at his table in the room opposite. Such practices, sir, cannot be tolerated, but must be visited with severe punishment, and it is my duty to investigate this matter. What have you to say, sir, in answer to this grave charge ?”

“ Simply, Mr. Dean, that part of this accusation may be true—the other part is certainly without any foundation.”

“ How so, sir ?”

“There was no party whatever in my rooms last evening, as I happened to be absent the whole time, at a friend’s, whence I returned rather late, at once retiring to rest.”

“How then, sir, do you account for one of your chairs being found sticking on the top of the college lamp? the said chair could not have walked out of your window, Mr. Howard, without assistance; of that fact you are, of course, aware, and I must require some explanation.”

“All the information,” replied Harry, “which I can communicate on this subject, shall be readily given. I returned rather late to my rooms, and immediately retired to bed; but soon after, I was aroused by a loud knocking at my bedroom door, and some one requesting admittance. On demanding the name of my nocturnal visitor and his business at that late hour, no answer was returned; but the knocking being repeated, I threatened to use the poker, unless this annoyance ceased; upon which I heard footsteps in my sitting-room, and the window thrown open. More I knew not, till

this morning, when I discovered one of my chairs resting on the lamp below. I did not hear the report of the pistol; nor do I think the shot could have been fired from my room."

"Well, Mr. Howard, that may be all very true; but you have undoubtedly a grave suspicion who this uncereemonious visitor may have been?"

"Certainly I have, sir, and my suspicions have been this morning confirmed, by the confession of the person implicated; but that confession was made with so much contrition, that my word has been passed not to divulge his name."

"Indeed, Mr. Howard! Then our dignity is to be compromised, and this outrage passed over, merely because you have promised not to betray the offender. It cannot be, sir; you must give up his name, or bear the consequences yourself, as having a guilty knowledge, if not of being actually yourself a party concerned."

"The latter insinuation, Mr. Dean, I most emphatically repudiate," replied Harry, rather

testily ; “and I must beg respectfully, but firmly, to adhere to my promise. But, I may add, that promise was given conditionally, that no such offence should ever be repeated by that person within these walls, or I would be the first to lay the information before you.”

The Dean rose from his chair, and paced the room for a few seconds, when confronting Harry, he said—

“I admire your candour, Mr. Howard, and would willingly screen you from the consequences of your imprudent promises ; but the whole college is in an uproar, and I am expecting every moment a message from the Provost on this unpleasant business. A further investigation must take place, and the perpetrator of this night’s folly will be required to be given up.”

“Then sir, I am afraid, the consequences must fall upon my own head.”

“Mr. Howard,” replied the Dean, “I will be as candid with you as you have been with me, and tell you, that as your conduct hitherto has been such as I approve, in regular attendance at

chapel, and in other respects, I shall use my endeavours to protect you from the consequences likely to ensue, in regard to your unwilling participation in this grave offence."

Thus ended the interview. Harry returned to his rooms, where he found Pat Phelan impatiently awaiting his return, who was not a little delighted to find his new friend had held firmly to his word, and that he at least was likely to avoid a collision with the dons. Harry, however, had made the Dean his friend also, who took his part, and the punishment awarded consisted only in a severe lecture, with caution for the future.

When the affair had blown over, Pat was rather profuse in his praises of Harry, for whom he ever afterwards retained a very deep regard ; and he was the only man in college who could ever control the fiery temper of this hot-headed, though light-hearted, son of Erin. Harry's narrow escape from rustication exercised a very powerful influence over his future conduct, although by principle and taste he was disposed not

to commit excesses ; but ever afterwards he avoided large and noisy parties, contenting himself with the society of a few select friends, whose ideas and habits were more in unison with his own. Robert's inclinations running in a contrary direction, he soon became the leader of the gay and noisy party, so that, except at the chapel and dinner-table, the two cousins did not often meet.

Thus passed three of the most eventful years of the young men's lives ; and the time having arrived for taking their degree, both passed their examination, and returned home.

## CHAPTER VI.

MR. HOWARD, the father of Harry, was a gentleman of very old family, then living at his country seat, Beechwood, surrounded by a large tract of landed property, of which he was proprietor, and at this period devoting his chief time to agricultural pursuits. In his younger days he had lived a good deal in high life, having been remarkably handsome, with polished and agreeable manners, so much so, as to attract the notice of royalty, by whom he was offered an appointment at court. As heir to a large fortune, he had a very handsome allowance from his father, then living, and kept his racers and



hunters ; and with the former, often ridden by himself, he had carried off a great many prizes. Upon marrying, he very soon retired into private life, keeping a good stud of hunters and a very superior pack of hounds, which none could manage more scientifically than himself. Although rather eccentric on some points, he was universally beloved by his poorer neighbours, possessing one of the most generous, kind hearts that ever beat in human breast. One example of both his eccentricity and kindness of disposition will explain his character as much or more than many pages.

During a severe winter, the poor of his parish were suffering much from want of work and provisions. Mr. Howard meeting the butcher, asked him how they got on in the village.

"Very badly, sir. It's no use my buying sheep any longer, for there's none now to sell to. We shall be starved soon altogether, if this sharp weather lasts much longer."

"I am sorry to hear such an account," replied Mr. Howard, "but come with me. Do

you see those sheep in the field?—How many are there?”

“About a score, sir, I should think.”

“Yes, that’s about the number. They have been fattening for the house, and are now ready. If those sheep are taken away this evening, killed, and distributed properly among the poor to-morrow, the butcher won’t be transported, and he may have the skins for his trouble.”

Old Anthony pulled off his hat, and was about to express his thanks, when Mr. Howard stopped all such attempts by riding quickly off in another direction.

Farmers also, if unable to make up their rent, or requiring a little assistance in bad times, often made Mr. Howard their banker, without his demanding security or five per cent. for the loan. Such was Mr. Howard;—totally devoid of worldly-mindedness, his chief pleasure was derived from affording pleasure to others. It is almost needless to add, that he was a good husband, a fond and indulgent father, although in certain points very strict with his children. Mrs.

Howard was also of very old family, and had been one of the belles of her day, still retaining those regularly handsome features which are not so easily affected by the hand of time as those of less classical mould. She had now, as well as Mr. Howard, retired from gay life, devoting her time to her children and the relief of the poor: in fact, a more estimable person than Mrs. Howard never existed. Self was entirely forgotten, her chief anxiety consisting in making those who came within her sphere happy and comfortable. Her youngest boy, Harold, being a very sickly child, required every possible care, and by her unremitting attention alone, he had been snatched from an early grave.

Robert Howard returned also to his father's seat, the Grange, an antique mansion like Beechwood, built in the Elizabethan style, and situated within a short distance of his cousins. His father being now far advanced in life, and of retired habits, Robert was left uncontrolled master over his time and actions. He had, during the vacations, kept up his connection with the

Barnard family, and from his flirtations with the beautiful Julia, it was generally supposed his affections were engaged to her beyond dispute. Harry also had not escaped quite heart-whole during all this time. About four miles distant from Beechwood (his father's house) resided a Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn, with an only daughter of Mrs. Selwyn's by a former marriage with Captain Maitland, of the —— Guards, a gentleman of old and high family in Scotland, who had died within three years of his marriage.

Mrs. Selwyn, after her first husband's death, remained a widow for many years, although from her extreme beauty and fascinating manners, she had received many most advantageous offers of marriage ; and it was only a few years previously that she accepted Mr. Selwyn, a gentleman much her senior in years, but of good connections and large fortune. Mr. Selwyn had also an only son by a former marriage, who was now the father of a large family, and resided in the adjoining county.

Mary Maitland was now entering her seven-

teenth year, her first acquaintance with Harry Howard having commenced about two years previously. She was rather above the usual height of women, of slight but finely moulded proportions and graceful figure, and of very interesting, if not strictly beautiful, features, dark brown hair, and dark grey eyes, beaming with softness and vivacity; but, above all, she possessed a sweetness of expression and gentleness of disposition, which, added to her loveliness of person, rendered her almost irresistibly attractive.

Harry Howard, on his return from Oxford, was much struck by the almost sudden improvement in Mary Maitland's appearance, who, within a few months, had grown from a pretty girl into a fascinating woman.

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry, mentally, "that I could call that sweet, artless girl by the endearing name of sister! what happiness would it be to watch over, guide, and protect her, on her first hazardous entrance upon life!"

Such was the nature of Harry Howard's feelings at that time towards his fair neighbour;

how soon they underwent a change may hereafter appear.

Harry's career at Oxford had passed without having produced in him any change of principles or conduct ; for although assailed by the usual temptations, he had come clear out of the furnace. With chivalrous and rather romantic feelings, he still possessed a firm and determined resolution, from which no arts or persuasions could ever turn him, when he believed he was doing right. The usual amusements and recreations of gay young men possessed no attractions for him ; he despised their follies and abhorred their vices ; but there was one pursuit of which he was passionately fond, the sports of the field ; and with the purpose of excelling in all he undertook, he soon became an accomplished and daring rider and superior sportsman, yet with the kindest disposition towards all dumb animals, which was shown by his dogs and horses being excessively attached to their young master, who always attended to their wants before considering his own, when returning from the field.

Harry had now reached his twentieth year ; his features had assumed a more manly cast ; in stature he was rather tall, being nearly six feet, but although slightly formed, he possessed great activity and strength, combined with courage equal to meet dangers of any kind, yet with a heart tender and compassionate almost to a fault, for the misfortunes or distresses of others. Such was Harry Howard, when first setting sail on the troubled sea of life.

Robert was inferior in height to his cousin, but had grown up in form and features a perfect Adonis. The character of the boy still remained not only unchanged, but confirmed ; he was gay, light-hearted, and fickle ; principles or consistency of conduct he had none. His handsome person obtained for its possessor almost universal favour with the fair sex, and vanity was now added to his other foibles ; in short, he considered himself a perfect lady-killer, to which title his almost uniform success in love-making and flirtations gave him a fair claim. His passion for Julia Barnard was at first perhaps of

a purer nature, but now mingled with vanity and ambition. When in her company, the remarks made by others could not fail to reach his ear, "What a handsome couple!" His boon companions also complimented him on his choice, declaring she was the prettiest girl they had ever beheld. Thus his vanity and self-love were alike flattered. She had also rank and fortune as additional attractions; but for disinterested affection, if he had ever felt such towards her, that was now rendered subservient to other considerations.

The two cousins, although so dissimilar in ideas and pursuits, were now thrown much together, from being such close neighbours in the country, and the absence of other young men in their immediate vicinity. They often made calls and dined at Elm Grove, and Robert could not suppress his admiration of Miss Maitland.

"Really, Harry," said Robert one day, as they were returning from Mr. Selwyn's, "it is surprising what an improvement has taken place in



Miss Maitland's appearance within the last six months, or is it because one never sees anything of ladies' society at Oxford, and therefore fancy the first girl we meet almost an angel?"

"Not exactly that, I conclude, Robert," replied Henry; "for the same thing struck me also, that she has now become a lovely and fascinating girl."

"Oh, indeed, Master Harry! I was not aware before, that such an anchorite as yourself could be influenced by female beauty. Women, I thought, were forbidden fruit to you."

"Certainly, Robert, a particular class of women excite in my mind only feelings of pity or disgust; but, on the other hand, I consider a young, lovely, and modest woman the most beautiful work of the whole creation."

"Really, Mr. Simon Pure, that is a wonderful admission for you, and I suppose thereby you are in love with Miss Maitland."

"Not so, Master Robert," replied Harry; "although I think her very interesting and pretty."

"Aye, aye, I see how it will be," rejoined Robert; "but I rather fancy the girl myself, and there is nothing like having two or three strings to your bow, in case of one snapping. Old Selwyn, they say, is as rich as a Jew, and if Julia don't suit, Mary Maitland may. So, Master Harry, I shall play my cards accordingly, unless my sober-minded cousin fancies he can cut me out, which, by the way, I don't think very likely."

"Oh, of course not," rejoined Harry; "I should not presume to compete with such a handsome, gifted person as yourself; but I only hope you will not endeavour to gain this young and artless girl's affections, when you have already gone so far with Julia Barnard."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Robert; "there's no harm in a little innocent flirtation; and nothing in the world I enjoy so much as making love to young girls in their teens. They are so bashful and timid at first, blushing up to their eyes, if the least allusion is made to love or marriage. Then to see how they swallow all

the soft nonsense that is breathed into their ears, their changing colour, nervous trepidation, and downcast looks, as if dreading their eyes should betray the feelings working in their hearts. Oh ! it's charming ! quite delightful !”

“ Robert,” said Henry, firmly, “ the man who is capable of thus tampering with a young girl's first and purest affections is a villain.”

“ Then of course your humble servant is one in your estimation,” replied Robert, “ and not fit for the society of such a refined person as Mr. Harry Howard ;” saying which, he set spurs to his horse, and dashed away.

From this day there arose a perceptible coolness between the cousins, and Harry mourned over the fate which he thought almost inevitable to Mary Maitland, without knowing how it could be avoided. He had seen too much of Robert's winning, flirting manner with women to doubt its effect on that young girl, and he could not endure the thought of seeing her fall a prey to his heartless machinations, believing that he

never entertained a serious thought of marrying her.

About a fortnight after the conversation above related between the cousins, they were both invited to a dinner-party at Elm Grove, and Harry witnessed with sorrow the evident pleasure with which Mary was listening to Robert's flattering compliments. Her pleased expression and varying colour revealed to Harry ominous signs of her sentiments towards the ruthless destroyer of her future peace of mind; but in their present position, he felt powerless to assist her, or avert the mischief which he was confident would follow.

Harry Howard, diffident of his own personal or intellectual endowments, and aware of his cousin's superiority in looks and manner, shrunk back from the contest with his more favoured rival, whose attentions to Miss Maitland, as if in derision of his cousin's disapproving looks, were most particular during the whole evening.

There was a Miss Dundonald, a particular friend of Mary Maitland's, staying at Elm

Grove, with whom Harry was sitting and conversing after dinner, when she observed—

“What a very handsome, fascinating person your cousin is, Mr. Howard ; he is really almost too good-looking for a man ; I think he would have made a beautiful girl ; his features are too fine and delicate for your sex.”

“And yet he appears,” replied Harry, “to be a great favourite with the ladies. All are ready to fall in love with him at first sight.”

“Not all, Mr. Howard ; I should not at least be one of the number. His manners are, to use a vulgar expression, too *finnicking* and flirting to have much influence with any but very young girls, and his countenance wants that manly expression which women of sense regard more, far more, than regularity of features. The index to a man’s mind is generally shewn by the eye, and I can read nothing in Mr. Robert Howard’s expression, in the least indicative of a firm or settled purpose, and yet I am aware he is still most fascinating.”

“And therefore, Miss Dundonald,” replied Henry, gravely, “a most dangerous companion to a young and unsophisticated girl, like your friend, Miss Maitland.”

“Yes, Mr. Howard, he certainly may be so ; but Mary is not likely to fall in love with the first handsome man she meets with—she is much too sensible, I hope, to commit such folly, although I admit the temptation is great as regards your cousin.”

“I sincerely hope not, Miss Dundonald—but at this moment appearances are against her, if I may judge by the attention she is bestowing on his fulsome addresses.”

“No doubt,” she replied, “Mary is very much taken with him, and I believe thinks him the handsomest and most agreeable man she has ever known.—Yet——” and she paused.

“Well,” asked Harry, “what yet?”

“She is not certainly yet seriously in love with him.”

“Are you quite sure of that?” enquired Henry, anxiously.

"Not quite, Mr. Howard, although very nearly so."

"Would to Heaven I could think the same," added Harry, impressively.

"And why so, Mr. Howard, may I ask?"

"Because, Miss Dundonald, God forbid that pure-minded sweet girl should ever become the wife of such an unprincipled fellow as Robert Howard. Were she my sister, and would that I could call her by that name, I would rather see her in her grave than married to such a man, although my own cousin."

"Indeed, Mr. Howard! are you serious in what you say, or prejudiced?"

"I am truly serious, Miss Dundonald, and not prejudiced. His real character has been known to me from boyhood's earliest years, and woe betide the woman he marries."

At this moment they were interrupted by the two subjects of their discourse approaching where they were sitting.

"Ah!" exclaimed Robert, "Miss Dundonald, the very person we were looking for. Come,

there's a good creature, to the piano, and play us the new set of quadrilles : we are going to have a dance on the carpet—Mrs. Selwyn has given her consent. Oh ! but I forget, I should have asked Mr. Henry Howard's approval also, as I am doubtful whether he considers dancing in his category of sinful acts or not—being intended for the church, he pretends to great sanctimoniousness of character and deportment, and we sinful creatures, who dance, and laugh, and sing, are in his opinion doomed to perdition. At Oxford he was called the young saint, but as young saints very often make old sinners, and *vice versa*, I prefer enjoying life whilst it is enjoyable ; it will be time enough to turn saint when I have had my run of fun and frolic."

" But suppose," said Harry, " that time should never come."

" Ah, well," said Robert, " even so, I shall have done only what half the world has done before my time."

" Very true," said Harry, " verifying Solo-



mon's words—'Folly is joy to him who is destitute of wisdom.'"

"Solomon, indeed!" exclaimed Robert, "the greatest sinner and veriest old humbug that ever existed—a canting hypocrite, talking about religion and morality. There was an example of a young saint turned into an old sinner, with a vengeance; why, he beats the Sultan of Turkey into fits, hah! hah! hah!" laughed Robert. "That's the way with all you canting, preaching, methodistical hypocrites."

"And yet," said Henry, "remember Solomon's confession, after the full experience of all worldly pleasures; 'Vanity of vanity, all is vanity;' and he adds, 'If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.'"

"There, that's preaching enough for one night, Master Harry, keep the rest for Sunday. And now, Miss Dundonald, let us have a quadrille, instead of a psalm tune."

Miss Maitland laughed at Robert's raillery—Miss Dundonald looked grave; but Harry How-

ard, with a smile of contempt on his lip, rose, and approaching Miss Maitland, said, "I hope you will give me an opportunity of proving, that I am not quite such an ascetic as my cousin represents me, by allowing me the pleasure of being your partner in the next dance."

"Oh, no, that won't do, Master Harry," interposed Robert—"Miss Maitland is engaged to me."

"Not for the whole evening, I conclude," replied he, calmly; "but I did not ask your permission, Mr. Robert, and shall only take a refusal from Miss Maitland's own lips."

"As I have got up the dance," said Robert, "I certainly consider Miss Maitland engaged to me, as long as the dancing continues, which may perhaps be only for two quadrilles."

"That is contrary to usual custom," said Harry, "and therefore my claim is as good as yours; but I shall bow to Miss Maitland's decision, whatever that may be."

"I scarcely know what to do," said Miss Maitland, fearing a rupture between the cousins,

‘but if there are more than two quadrilles, I shall be happy to dance with you the third.’”

Harry made her a low bow, and walked away to another part of the room, where he met with better success from a Miss Parker, a lively girl of Miss Maitland’s own age ; and they were soon standing *vis-à-vis* to Robert and his partner. Harry, piqued and annoyed, made himself as agreeable as possible, and his cheerful good humour did not pass unnoticed by Miss Maitland. After the second quadrille, Harry, seeing Lucy Dundonald had left the piano, asked her hand for the next dance.

“Oh, but I heard Mary say she would accept you for the third,” replied Lucy.

“Extorted favours are not very complimentary,” rejoined Harry ; “and I am well aware Miss Maitland would prefer dancing the whole evening with my cousin, in preference to such a canting, methodistical fellow as myself.”

“I think not, Mr. Howard ; she feared being made the innocent cause of a rupture between you, and therefore acted accordingly.”

“By deciding, two to one against me; a very considerate and impartial judgement indeed,” added Harry, with a look of proud disdain.

“Yet I think you should claim the fulfilment of her engagement,” replied Lucy.

“Not if you will accept me; for she is still hanging on Robert’s arm, and evidently avoiding this side of the room. So come, let us join the set; for see, Robert and his partner have just taken their places, therefore my conclusion is the right one.”

As Harry crossed over in the dance, Miss Maitland said, “I thought you were engaged to me for this quadrille.”

“Yes,” he replied, “such I believe was the case; but observing your decided preference for my cousin, and evident reluctance to quit his arm, I could not be so cruel as to deprive you of his charming and instructive conversation, even for the short period of a quadrille.”

Mary blushed deeply at this rebuke, but made no reply.

The party soon after broke up, and none but

the visitors remaining, the company who had left were freely canvassed by them, over the wine and water which was brought in before they retired to their rooms.

Mr. Selwyn remarked, that the young Howards had now become the most handsome and agreeable men he had ever met with.

"As to Robert," said Mrs. Selwyn, "he is really a perfect Adonis—I never saw any one so really handsome—too beautiful for a man—and he is so very agreeable and entertaining. Don't you think so, my dears?" turning to her daughter and Lucy.

A ready assent was given by both the young ladies; but the colour mounted to Mary's brow, which was not unobserved by her friend.

"Well," said Lady Dundonald, "as you have given your opinions, I shall now give mine. Mr. Robert Howard is undeniably good-looking, and very captivating in his manners; but Mr. Henry Howard is of a more manly character, and, depend upon it, will turn out the handsomer man of the two."

No exception was taken to this judgment ; and Lucy added, " I think, mamma, your opinion will be confirmed."

As Lady Barnard and her family had not yet returned to the gay city of Bath (where they generally resided during the winter season), Robert resolved to employ his leisure hours in making a conquest of Miss Maitland, if only for the pleasure of annoying his cousin, whom he suspected of being in love with her. His visits to Elm Grove were very frequent, and he often dined there twice in the week, besides riding with Mary and her father, and spending the whole day nearly in her society.

Harry Howard kept aloof, knowing Robert's superiority of person and address, and observing the pleasure with which he was always received ; and it must be confessed, that this artless girl's heart was imperceptibly yielding to Robert's fascinating and unremitting attentions, when an occurrence happened which opened her eyes to her admirer's utter want of proper feeling, and turned her admiration almost into disgust.

Intelligence arrived of the sudden death of Mary's well-beloved cousin, Stewart Maitland, who had ever been to her as a dear brother, and to whom, being many years her senior, she had been indebted for much good advice and instruction since childhood. Robert happened to call a few days afterwards, and found Mary lamenting her untimely bereavement of one so deservedly beloved.

"What!" exclaimed he, entering the room, "in mourning and tears, Miss Maitland? Oh! pray tell me what has occasioned this sudden transition to lamentation, mourning, and woe."

"Have you not heard," she asked, "of my dear cousin Stewart's unexpected and lamented death?"

"No," he said, "I have not; but he was only a cousin, you say, and to my mind, cousins are the most disagreeable relations in the world. I wish to heaven all mine were dead, and buried too. Come," he said, approaching her, to take her hand (which she as hastily withdrew), "I cannot bear to see those beautiful eyes red with

weeping; it is indeed very unbecoming; and tears and mourning are my abomination."

Without deigning a reply, Mary rose from her chair, and darting out of the room, sought her own chamber, where she gave vent to a fresh flood of tears, at her lover's heartless conduct in her distress.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "what a contrast to my kind, warm-hearted cousin—and could he talk so lightly of your death, my poor, lost Stewart? How could I fancy I loved such a man as this? Love him," she repeated, "oh, no, it is fascination only. I do not, cannot ever love such a character as his. I see him now in his true light—heartless, frivolous, and selfish, as Lucy always said he was."

The day following, Harry having heard of the loss sustained by the family at Elm Grove, deemed it a mere act of neighbourly attention to call and express his sympathy in their bereavement. Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn being occupied (as was their usual custom before luncheon) in their morning-room, Harry was shewn into



the drawing-room, where he found Mary Maitland alone. She rose on his entrance, looking pale, and with the traces of tears still visible in her eyes, held out her hand, which was warmly grasped by Harry, who said, "I am indeed distressed to hear of your sudden loss, and only wish it were in my power to impart some little consolation in your present affliction."

The tone and look with which these words were uttered caused her tears to flow afresh, and she replied—

"I fear you will think me very foolish to give way thus; but, indeed, I cannot help it. My poor Stewart was everything to me—cousin, friend and brother, and with him I have lost the only true friend I ever possessed, besides my own dear mother."

"Heaven forbid, I should think you foolish, for mourning one so good and dear to you!" replied Harry; "indeed, indeed. I do feel for you, God knows how sincerely." And the tears started to his eyes, at witnessing the deep grief

of the fair girl, who could not suppress her sobs at this unexpected sympathy, from one she had thought so little of.

“ Oh !” she exclaimed, rising, “ it is very wrong, my giving way thus, before you, Mr. Howard, almost a stranger ; but there was something in your voice and manner, which reminded me so of dear Stewart. I must now leave you, for I am quite unfit for company.”

“ Do not go yet,” said Harry, gently taking her hand. “ Oh, do not apply the term stranger to one who feels deeply for your distress. Let me supply the place, though unworthily, of him you have lost, and look on Harry Howard as a friend and brother ; for such from this day he will be to you, if you will accept his poor, but sincere services, to watch over and protect you with a brother’s care. To no higher title do I aspire. Let me be your brother and friend.”

Mary was quite overcome by this fervent and truth-telling appeal.

“Your kindness of heart, and many excellent qualities, are well known to me, Mr. Howard, and I should indeed be happy could I call you brother.”

“Then,” replied Harry, “from henceforth I will endeavour to prove myself deserving your confidence and regard ; so now you must comply with my first brotherly desire, to put on your bonnet, and take a turn on the lawn. The air will revive you.”

“Oh, no,” she said, “I think I had better go to my room.”

“No, no,” said Harry ; “you will not surely refuse the first request of your new relative ; he knows what is good for you — so pray come.”

A few minutes after, Harry and Mary were walking side by side, through the garden, and after an hour’s ramble the spirits of his newly-adopted sister seemed to revive, and her utter desolation of thought gave way to his soothing influence ; she listened to the calm, religious

sentiments of her warm-hearted, sympathizing companion, and mentally exclaimed—

“ I have, indeed, found a brother and comforter, in my affliction !”

From that day Harry Howard was no longer a stranger at Elm Grove, and Robert soon perceived an alteration in Mary anything but confirmatory of the conquest he plumed himself on having achieved, over this young and sweet girl's affections.

“ Ah,” thought Robert, “ I see how this has happened ; that canting fellow Harry has taken advantage of her sorrow, to pour consolation into her heart, and has for the present gained some influence over her : but the time of mourning will soon be ended, and then I'll pay him off for his confounded meddling.”

Harry had gained, however, so much ground, and was still gaining more every day in Miss Maitland's esteem, that a comparison between his frank and manly sentiments, and those of his more frivolous though handsomer cousin,

was all in favour of the former, who was making that impression on her heart, which she had never before experienced towards any other man.

## CHAPTER VII.

AT the time when this tale commences, the gay city of Bath was the general resort of many families of distinction during the winter season, and thither Lord Barnard and his family repaired, as well as Robert and Harry Howard, for a few weeks' recreation. Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn also had a house there, which may account for Harry's presence, as he was most anxious to witness their fair daughter's introduction to the gay world, intending, with his romantic and chivalrous feelings, to watch over and protect her with a brother's care.

Mary Maitland, although so young, had already received the homage due to her beauty

and sweet disposition. She had at that time several admirers, one of whom, slightly known to Harry, had resolved to obtain her hand at any cost, making no secret of his intentions! Mr. Macneil was a great friend of Mr. Selwyn's son, and had procured through his means an introduction, and, with his assistance and promises of support, resolved to carry off the prize. Harry, disliking this man's principles, and seeing this young girl thrown so much into his power, was equally resolved, at all hazards, to save her from his machinations. With knight-errant chivalry he therefore determined to broach this subject to Miss Maitland (although a most delicate one), and ascertain her real feelings towards Mr. Macneil. Marry him, he was determined she should not; although, it must be confessed, he had then no idea of marrying her himself, nor did his feelings at that time towards her tend in that direction.

An opportunity soon presented itself. On riding over to make a morning call at Elm Grove, Harry met Mr. Macneil returning from

the house. The usual salutations passed, but Harry's quick eye detected a gloomy look in his opponent's face, which augured well for his beginning. Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn were gone out for a drive, and, to Harry's great delight, he found the young lady only at home. As a neighbour, and being on very friendly terms with the family, he gave his horse to the servant, and was ushered into the drawing-room. Upon entering he offered his hand, and hoped he might claim the privilege of a friend, for intruding himself on her presence, in Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn's absence.

"Oh," replied Miss Maitland, in her usual sweet tones, "you are always welcome, Mr. Howard, and I can only regret papa and mamma are not here to receive you."

"That's more than *I do*," thought Harry; but she added—

"I expect their return very soon."

"That's a bore again," thought Harry, "and I have no time to lose."

Well, how to set about divulging the object



of his visit, Harry was just now puzzling his brain, and he experienced the usual difference between resolutions and actions.

It was a most delicate affair, and Harry became spell-bound when in the presence of this beautiful girl, in whose welfare he had taken so deep an interest. Miss Maitland remarked his unusually absent manner, and hoped nothing unpleasant had occurred.

"I beg a thousand pardons, Miss Maitland, for my rudeness; but, to speak the truth (and you know you once told me, I was always to be candid with you), my amiable temper has been considerably ruffled this morning by meeting a gentleman, coming out of your lodge gates, who does not happen to be very agreeable to me, and the look he gave me was rather of the cut-throat order."

A slight blush overspread Miss Maitland's fair brow as she replied—"You mean Mr. Macneil, I suppose, who called here this morning; but, as papa and mamma were not at home, he was not admitted."

Harry breathed again, but said quickly—

“Did he not ask to see you?”

She cast on Harry one of her soft and sunny smiles, and archly replied—

“Why do you ask that question, Mr. Howard?”

“From no idle curiosity, believe me, Miss Maitland; but I am presuming too much, I fear, on the privilege of a friend, who takes a deep interest in your happiness.”

Harry, in his chivalrous mood, had overshot the mark again, as he thought. No words or look of displeasure, however, proceeded from the fair girl before him. She said, without hesitation—

“I am much obliged by your professions of friendship towards me, and with equal candour will tell you that Mr. Macneil was not admitted here this morning, because I did not desire to see him in my mother’s absence.”

“Is he on general visiting terms, then, at your house?”

“We see him occasionally, as he is a great friend of George’s.”

"And a great friend of yours, also perhaps?"

"I am not aware, Mr. Howard," replied Miss Maitland, rather offended, "that such is a natural consequence."

"Oh, no, not always; but it does happen so, in many cases, and I began to fear this might prove no exception; at least, so says the world."

"What do you mean, Mr. Howard—what does the world say?"

"Miss Maitland," replied Harry, in a gentle, though now serious tone of voice, "I feel I have gone either too far or not far enough; I will therefore candidly explain myself. You said, some time ago, I might consider you in the light of a friend, and that you would be glad at any time of my advice, if I thought you required it. I do, and have long looked upon you as a sister, who, about to enter now on the shifting scenes of life, may need perhaps a brother's arm to protect her from insult or harm. That brother, Miss Maitland, if you will accept his poor but honest services, you shall ever find in Harry Howard."

This was uttered with such pathos and feeling, that Miss Maitland was sensibly affected, and she answered, "I do, indeed, thank you most sincerely, Mr. Howard, for your kindness, and know full well I shall need the advice of such a friend as you, now my poor cousin is gone; but I hope you will never be embroiled in any unpleasantry on my account. That time, at least, will I trust be very far distant."

She was startled by an unusual solemnity in Harry's voice, as he replied, "That time is already come."

Turning pale as death, she faintly asked, "Mr. Howard, what *can* you mean?"

"One word only will suffice; tell me in truth and sincerity, as you would have confided in your poor cousin if alive, is Mr. Macneil more to you than a common acquaintance, or can you ever regard him in any other light?"

"Oh, indeed, he can never be anything more to me."

"Enough, Miss Maitland, leave the rest to my discretion; and now good bye, as I hear

carriage-wheels approaching. Keep up your spirits ; at our next meeting all shall be explained."

Saying which, Harry hurriedly took his leave, and was off like a shot, full gallop on his return home.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WE must now go back a little, to see the cause of Harry's visit to Elm Grove.

Mr. Macneil was, as we have said before, an old friend of George Selwyn's, who openly encouraged his attentions, and secretly connived at his intentions towards his sister-in-law. Macneil was a fine, tall, rather good-looking man of about five-and-twenty—of no profession, and of no great prospects of advancement in life ; and knowing Miss Maitland would inherit considerable property, he had resolved, in conjunction with his ally, George Selwyn, to marry her. He was sufficiently a man of the world

to have discovered that a young girl is generally taken with the man who first pays her marked and flattering attention, and he trusted to his fine person to do the rest. We must, however, do him the common justice to say, that this beautiful girl had inspired him with deep feelings of love or passion, which we will not at present too minutely criticise.

Mr. Macneil had been playing this game for months, during Harry's absence at Oxford, and as his sister and Miss Maitland had also become acquainted, Macneil, with a considerable share of vanity, made sure he had gained now a sufficient influence over Miss Maitland to induce her at no very distant day to become his wife. Beyond this, Mr. Macneil and his worthy coadjutor had resolved, if requisite, to carry her off by stratagem or force, George Selwyn undertaking to obtain his father's forgiveness after the thing had been accomplished.

It is not matter therefore of surprize that the visits of Harry Howard to Elm Grove caused

some uneasiness to Mr. Macneil's mind. Miss Maitland, as most young girls are, might have been at first flattered by his attentions, but her affections were not engaged, and her heart still remained in her own keeping. This Macneil could not bring himself to believe; marry her he declared he would; and openly asserted, that she not only corresponded with him, but was already engaged also.

A friend of Harry's had a few days previously spoken to him on this subject, as a matter of course, which nettled him not a little, and he resolved, as we have seen, to ascertain the truth from Miss Maitland's own lips. Macneil was no favourite; being a coarse, bullying sort of fellow, a character disliked by Harry; and he felt assured this young girl's happiness would be wrecked for ever if united to such a person. After Harry's interview with the young lady, he sought the friend who had communicated this information, without delay.

"You informed me the other day," said Harry, "that our neighbour's daughter was



engaged to be married to Mr. Macneil; pray may I ask your authority for this news?"

"Oh, certainly; it's no secret — Macneil himself told me, and boasts of it publicly in the city and the field."

"Does he?" replied Harry, bursting with just indignation; "then tell him and every one else from me, that it is false."

"Ho! ho! Master Harry, sits the wind in that quarter? Then *you* are, I conclude, to be the happy man?"

"Your conclusion, sir, is as far wrong as your information."

"Well, my good fellow," said his friend, "you appear to be in a towering passion about this affair; what business can it be of yours? You are not a relation—she has a father-in-law and brother; and unless you are actually in love with her yourself, surely you have no good title to interfere."

"Well," replied Harry, "there is certainly some sense in your observations, but just for a few moments listen to mine. Miss Maitland

has a father-*in-law*, it is quite true, and also a brother-*in-law* ; the former is much too old, and the latter too interested, to take up weapons in her defence ; in fact, I have it from the best source, that the worthy Mr. George has handed over all his authority in the case to his dear friend and ally, Mr. Macneil ; and in short, John Power, this artless, unsuspecting girl, is to be made the victim of these deep scoundrels. If she refuses to marry this said Macneil, her character on her first appearance in public will be blighted, as one who has broken her faith and pledged engagement."

" Confound their villanous schemes !" exclaimed John Power ; " this is a serious affair indeed, and such a sweet girl must be saved from their clutches if possible. But what's to be done, Harry ?—you may depend upon my assistance in such a case as this. But, steady, my boy, haste won't do here ; that Macneil is a big, blustering fellow, and could thrash two such as you are."

" Could he, by Jove !" cried Harry ; " only let

him try, and I think he'll find one at a time quite enough for him. His body may be large, but his heart is small enough, I'll engage, for bullies are ever cowards."

"Well, but Harry, what do you intend doing?"

"Protect that girl I will, and make this big, blustering fellow eat his own words, or my name is not Harry Howard."

"Sooner said than done, Harry; however, as the old saying says, 'In for a penny in for a pound.' If you are resolved to act in this manner, you may reckon on John Power as your friend."

"Thank you, John, with all my heart; so now to business. Will you ride with me into the gay city, where I dare say we shall find Macneil as usual sauntering up and down Mil-som Street, the general resort of idle men, and then, John, I shall have a word or two to say to him."

"Avoid publicity in such a delicate case as this, Harry."

“So I would, willingly; but as he has so publicly announced and blazoned about his pretended engagement to Miss Maitland, he shall as publicly retract it, or I will use my best endeavours to make him do so.”

John Power, being of a cautious disposition, endeavoured, but in vain, to dissuade Harry from his purpose. He therefore resolved to assist him out of the scrape as well as he could. The two friends, having mounted their horses, rode off into Bath. Having put them up, they walked into Milsom Street, where they soon found, as expected, Mr. Macneil lounging up and down, with a couple of friends, one on either side.

“Now, Harry,” said John Power, “keep yourself cool, and don’t forget that you are a gentleman whatever Macneil may be.”

“Never fear me, John; I will endeavour to be as cool as a cucumber.”

Being soon confronted with Mr. Macneil and his party, and the usual greetings having passed, Harry thus quietly addressed his opponent :—

"I have been told, Mr. Macneil, that you have taken the great liberty of stating publicly in this place as well as in others, that you are engaged to be married to a young lady, who is both a neighbour and friend of mine ; and I take this opportunity of asking you whether the information I have received is correct ?"

Macneil turned red and white by turns, and his lips quivered with passion, as he haughtily replied, " And pray, Mr. Harry Howard, may I ask what right or authority you can have to address such an impertinent question to me ?"

" If there is any *impertinence* in the matter," retorted Harry, with a strong emphasis on the word, " it belongs solely to yourself. My question was a proper and a pertinent one, and, as the friend of this young lady, I demand an answer."

" You demand an answer !" cried Macneil, livid with rage.

" Yes," coolly replied Harry ; " and I shall have one, or you, Mr. Macneil, must take the consequences."

“And what are these mighty consequences likely to be?”

“This is the consequence I meant: I tell you here publicly, that the report you have spread about your engagement with Miss Maitland is entirely without foundation, and you know it is; and beyond this, I beg to tell you, that if you dare to take any further liberties with this young girl’s name, I will call you to account for it, Mr. Macneil: that’s all I have to say at present.”

“And enough too, by the powers!” exclaimed an Irish friend of Macneil’s; “it’s just as pretty a little beginning to a small shooting-party, as I could wish to see.”

This last remark did not at all suit Mr. Macneil’s taste, who had a great aversion to the smell of powder, and he turned away, saying—

“You shall hear from me soon, Mr. Howard.”

“The sooner the better,” replied Harry; “I shall not leave Bath until to-morrow at twelve o’clock.”

“ Well, Macneil,” said his Irish friend, “ that’s as smart a young cockerel as I have met with many a day ; but there’s not much of him for a target to shoot at, and it’s ten to one you don’t wing him. You must stand sideways, Macneil, for your big carcass will be sadly in the way. Is he a tolerable hand with the trigger ?”

“ As for that and other games of the sort,” chimed in their other companion, “ young Harry is well known as a daring rider, good shot, and not a bad fighter ; so I think we had better try and hush this matter up, as Macneil has no chance at twelve paces.”

Macneil’s more prudent friend was therefore commissioned to see John Power, and try to settle this unpleasant affair in a quiet way ; the former asserting that Macneil had received letters from the young lady, which warranted him in his statement. John Power insisted on their production, when it turned out they were only common-place correspondence between Macneil’s sister and Miss Maitland, which amounted to nothing ; and Mr. Macneil was obliged at last,

with a very bad grace, to withdraw his big words ; and the bully soon after disappeared from the gay city.

So much for Harry's first feat of knight-errantry in defence of distressed damsels. Whether he would have acted in the same manner towards every young lady in like circumstances does not at present appear quite conclusive, although the supposition is decidedly in his favour ; his hand was always going with his heart, which happened to be a most benevolent though impulsive one. — The day following, Harry was on his way to Elm Grove, and arrived there about one o'clock. Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn were at home, and he was invited to take luncheon, which he did, having found that the carriage was ordered as usual at two, and hoping that the young lady might not be of the party. Guessing Harry had something to communicate for her ear alone, she pleaded some excuse for remaining at home, and Harry had the pleasure of handing her mamma into the carriage, and for his politeness was rewarded with



an invitation to dine with them the same evening ; which he gladly accepted, saying he would ride home, and return at the appointed hour. He had of course left his riding-whip in the hall, for which he must return, and from the hall he soon found his way into the drawing-room again, where he enjoyed a most interesting *tête-à-tête* conference with his adopted sister. As far as was necessary, Harry gave her an explanation of his interview with Mr. Macneil, and also informed her that a deep scheme had been laid by that worthy and her brother-in-law to carry her off by force, should she not have consented to accept his hand, but he assured her she might now feel quite at ease, as Mr. Macneil had shown the white feather, and retracted all he had said to her disparagement.

The poor girl was deeply affected by Harry's recital, but expressed her dread of Mr. Macneil's and her brother-in-law's resentment.

"Never fear them, my dear Miss Maitland ; Harry Howard is more than a match for two such cowardly curs as they are, and they shall

have his life-blood before they shall injure you ; but do not for a moment trouble yourself about them ; their plans are detected and exposed, and I will narrowly watch their movements for the future."

"And how," replied Miss Maitland, "can I ever repay you for your generous conduct towards me?"

"By remaining the same sweet, artless girl you are now," added Harry ; "and heaven forbid you should ever become a Bath flirt!"


"Of that," she said, "I hope there is no fear."

"Then I shall be amply rewarded."

Recollecting that he had some engagement that afternoon, he took his leave, promising to return at the dinner-hour.

## CHAPTER IX.

It may be thought by the generality of my readers, that there could be little difficulty in defining the feelings of these two young persons towards each other; in fact, that they were really in love; and yet in truth such was not the case. That the seeds of mutual affection were then sown, we admit, which in after-years ripened into a firm and lasting attachment; but at the time we are writing of, pure friendship was the only bond of union which linked these two young hearts together. Harry being intended for the law or the church, well knew he could not at so early an age form any matrimonial alliance, neither would his inclination have



prompted him to have engaged her affections thus early; debarring her, when just entering life, from forming, perhaps, a more eligible connection. Such were Harry's ideas at the time; but it must be confessed, that they were both placing themselves on very dangerous ground by these frequent meetings and friendly intercourse. The world judges by appearances only, and Harry's visits to Elm Grove were attributed only to one cause. His chivalrous defence also of the young lady was immediately noised abroad, and a match of course proclaimed as the certain consequence. All this was reported to Harry by his friend, John Power; and his resolution was taken, as soon as Macneil should be entirely off the ground, to pay a visit for a short time to a friend in a distant part of the country, John Power engaging to give him the earliest information, should that worthy return during his absence.

The anticipated pleasure of the next dinner-party at Elm Grove was considerably damped by this information of Power, and Harry became

certainly not a very entertaining guest on this occasion. He was silent and absent, and his behaviour could not escape the observation of Miss Maitland, who indulged all kinds of fanciful surmises as to the cause of it. On the return of the gentlemen to the drawing-room, Harry had, by the aid of an extra glass or two of wine, become almost as cheerful as usual ; but a woman's fears or suspicions, when once fairly roused, are not easily allayed. Miss Maitland could not suppress her anxiety ; and when Harry joined her, she timidly inquired if anything unpleasant had since happened, as his spirits appeared so low during dinner.

" Oh, it's nothing at all," replied Harry ; " I got into a brown study, which I ought to have been ashamed of exhibiting in the presence of ladies ; but the fit is quite over, I assure you."

" Mr. Howard," she said, " I fear you are not now treating me with your usual candour ; something has annoyed you, I can see, and I dread some fresh trouble. Pray do not deceive me, for I can bear anything but uncertainty, but I

cannot allow you to run any further risk on my account. Papa must and ought to interfere."

"On my word of honour," replied Harry, "nothing further has occurred of the kind you dread."

"What, then, is the matter? You are not yourself this evening."

"Am I, then, to divulge all my inward feelings, and treat you as my lady confessor?" archly inquired Harry, which caused a slight blush to rise on Mary's fair brow.

"Oh, no, not always—only now—this once only do I ask you to be candid with me."

"Well, then," replied Harry, "so be it, for I perceive your suspicions are not yet removed. The cause of my silence at dinner was, that I was thinking of a visit I had promised a friend in a distant part of the country, and I was doubting whether a fair friend of mine at Elm Grove would feel gratified or not at my departure."

Mary's sweet features were for a moment

clouded over ; quickly, however, recovering her self-possession, she asked—

“ And is this really all, Mr. Howard ? ”

“ On my faith as a true knight, yes ; but,” murmured Harry, “ it is quite enough for me.”

Finding this would not do any longer, he said, “ I must now wish you good night, having all my preparations to make for to-morrow,” and taking her hand in his own, whispered in a low voice—“ May Heaven watch over and protect my sweet sister until Harry returns ; ” and wishing Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn a hasty “ good night,” was gone from the room before Mary could recover from her surprise at his abrupt departure.

Mrs. Selwyn could not help exclaiming on Harry’s leave-taking—

“ What can be the matter with Mr. Howard this evening ?—He is so unlike himself, there must be something amiss, Mary.” Turning to her daughter, “ Can you explain it ? ”

“ Oh, nothing particular I believe, mamma,

only he is going from home early to-morrow morning on a visit to a friend."

No more was said, but a faint suspicion crossed the mind of old Mr. Selwyn, that Henry Howard thought more deeply of his step-daughter than he had hitherto given him credit for. His parting and earnest words rung in Mary's ears long after, and for the first time she felt he was dearer to her than she had ever before believed.

What was the nature of Harry's musings on his four mile homeward ride? The subject of them might be easily imagined.

It was a wild and stormy night; a strong westerly wind, with drifting rain, beat hard in his face as he galloped along; but Harry heeded it not; his thoughts were too much occupied with Mary Maitland.

"Oh, what a dear sweet girl that is!" he murmured; "so beautiful — so innocent — so affectionate! Thank God she has escaped that villain's clutches! But what next, Harry? are you not in love with her yourself? No, not



that *just* yet. Could you see her married to another without a sharp pang of the heart?" This question Harry could not answer very satisfactorily at first. "Well, perhaps I could, if she made choice of some honourable, upright fellow, who could love and cherish her as I would."

Still this idea was not an agreeable one; it jarred and grated on his feelings, and went all against the grain.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Harry, "this will never do. I am not actually in love yet, but another such an affair as Mr. Macneil's and my fate and hers are sealed for weal or woe; and why not, Harry? simply because I must not think of marrying for some years to come, and it would be utter selfishness to mar that girl's prospects in life by a too early engagement to myself. It won't do," said he aloud, with a dig of his heel into his horse's side, "so there's an end of the matter. I'll forget her——"

"Ho! ho! ho!" screamed a voice, close to his ear, as in derision of his last resolve.

“ And who and what are you ? ” shouted Harry.

“ Why, who should I be ? Farmer Giles to be sure ; and I thought you’d a knocked me over, horse and all. Ah, Master Harry, what a swinging jam in the leg you have a gie’d me, surely.”

“ I beg your pardon, farmer, with all my heart, and hope I have not seriously hurt you.”

“ Why, dang it all ! I can’t say yet, for I bean’t sure if I’ve got a leg in my boot or no. Don’t ye gallop so fast on dark nights, Squire, along these narrow roads, with a stone wall on both sides, where a man can’t *get out of the way* ; ride over gates and hedges as hard as you like, but don’t ye go at a Christian man like a post and rails, Master Harry.”

A certain tingling in the leg soon convinced Farmer Giles he had no bones broken, but he didn’t forget his tilt with Harry for some time. They parted good friends, however, for Harry was an especial favourite with all the farmers of

his neighbourhood, and with the lower orders also.

The dreams of Harry that night were of the same character as his ride home. He fell asleep dreaming of Mary Maitland ; but another vision soon appeared—a monster in the form of Macneil, hissing and grinning and trying to bear her fainting form from his arms ; and in a desperate one-handed encounter with this bugbear he awoke.

Sleep was now out of the question, and he therefore dressed himself and set out early on his journey into Hampshire, to pay his long-promised visit to his earliest and most attached friend.

William Fowler was the eldest son of a gentleman of large fortune. The family consisted of three other sons and one daughter ; and a more united and happy coterie of father, mother, and children could not be found. William and Henry had, from a similarity of tastes and disposition, become early friends, when at school, and had also passed through their university

ordeal together, firmly bound to each other, by that rare tie of true friendship whose bond was only loosed by the hand of death. With this truly amiable and closely-united family, Harry always felt himself quite at home. Mr. and Mrs. Fowler were patterns of true conjugal love; and although now far advanced in years, with their children around, to whom they were also devotedly attached, they presented a picture of domestic happiness rarely to be seen, and no jarring elements here intervened to disturb the harmony of this happy circle.

Miss Fowler was a person of most amiable and affectionate disposition, and strongly attached to her eldest brother William. Harry passed a most agreeable month with his friend, when one morning, at the breakfast-table, he received a letter from John Power, which ran thus :

“ MY DEAR HARRY,

“ As your Fidus Achates I have kept a sharp look out in a certain quarter, but Mac-

neil has never shewn his face (since your departure) in these parts.

“There’s poaching, however, going on, and a worse rival at work now than that fellow Macneil. Your cousin Robert I find pays rather frequent visits to Elm Grove; and you know his winning, flirting ways with women, to say nothing of his confounded handsome phiz, and that curly head of his, with which all the girls are so much taken. I met him at a dinner party there last night, and the attentions he was paying your fair friend were most particular; and I must be candid enough to tell you, they did not appear to be disagreeable to herself, as she was laughing and chatting with him the whole evening.

“Believe me, dear Harry,

“Yours truly,

“JOHN POWER.”

Upon reading this epistle, a dark cloud overspread Harry’s features, which his friend observing, said,

"I fear you have had some unpleasant news this morning."

There were few secrets between them, and Harry at once placed the letter in his friend's hand.

"Well," said Fowler, when he had read it, "I always suspected there was something more than you chose to tell me about this pretty neighbour of yours. In short, Harry, you are in love with her."

"Not so, William, on my word, that I know, at present. I view her in the light of a dear sister, but I have not yet experienced any of that passion men are said to feel towards women they wish to marry. Mine is a pure, unselfish affection, which even an angel might not blush to own. Passion forms no part of it."

"Well, Harry, I believe your feelings are *now* just as you describe them, for you can have no object in deceiving me ; but, my dear fellow, you are, I think deceiving yourself ; your affection no doubt is pure and unselfish, but

still it is Love. Now let us come to the point at once, what objection is there to her marrying Robert if she likes him? He is handsome fond of flirting, it is true (but a wife may cure him of that propensity), of pleasing and fascinating manners, good family connections, and last, though by no means least in the opinion of most young ladies, heir to a good fortune."

"That's a very fair description of him, as far as it goes; but from long experience I can add a little more, which is equally true: he is without any sound principles either of morality or religion, selfish to a degree, vain and capricious; and you may take my word for it, which we perhaps may both see realized, the woman he marries will be miserable. One word more; he has already gained the affections of a young and beautiful girl, and has been received by the family as an accepted suitor. Now, Fowler, what say you?"

"That he is an unprincipled scoundrel!"

"Very well; then I must be off to-mor-

row morning, and warn this dear girl of her danger."

"And as surely get your own neck into the noose as my name is Will Fowler—that's my prediction, Harry ; and I'll bet you a five pound note will be fulfilled, too, though not perhaps just yet. It is a dangerous game playing at friendship with a beautiful girl of sweet seventeen. In sober seriousness, one word more I must add before we dismiss this subject, and I know you will not take offence at the advice offered by your old schoolfellow and sincere friend ; for your own sake and Miss Maitland's peace of mind, pray be cautious how you act for the future—you may perhaps gain her affections without intending it. What then ? you would make both yourself and her miserable ! If, therefore, you really cannot marry her, be guarded and as distant in your manners as consistent with mere neighbourly attentions."

"I will try to follow your good advice, although I admit it will be rather a difficult matter."



Here the subject dropped; but notwithstanding his friend's pressing entreaties to remain a few days longer, the next morning found Harry on his homeward journey.

## CHAPTER X.

HARRY reached home, weary in body, low in spirits, and sick at heart. Power's information about Miss Maitland's flirtation with Robert vexed him sorely. "What!" he mentally exclaimed, "in one short month could she forget all my advice, and realize the character I abhor? Yet perhaps it may not be true after all—I must judge for myself;" and like a prudent general, before commencing an engagement, he resolved to take a view of the enemy's camp.

On the following day, therefore, he paid a visit to Robert, who soon confirmed his worst suspicions, by relating, with his usual vanity and not very strict adherence to truth, the

flirtation he boasted he had been carrying on for the last month with Miss Maitland. Harry being nettled at the liberty Robert was taking with her name, questioned, with some anger, the truth of such a story.

"I repeat it, it's all true," said Robert, "and more than that, she would marry me to-morrow, if I chose to propose to her."

"Indeed!" said Harry; "then why don't you?"

"Wait a bit, my fine fellow; I am not in such a hurry to be married just yet; I must have my fun out first; and there's another consideration, I must be sure of her money, before I would marry any woman."

"And pray, Mr. Robert, what is to become of a certain Miss Julia Barnard? I thought you were already engaged to her—so report goes."

"Does it? then report goes a little too fast. The question has not been popped yet."

"Perhaps not," replied Harry; "but you have gone so far, to my certain knowledge, that no honourable man could retreat. You have won

that girl's affections, and I hope, for her sake, you intend to marry her."

"Come, Mr. Harry, none of your heroics with me; when I wish your advice, I will ask for it. You want Miss Maitland yourself, I suppose, albeit your whining nonsense about platonic friendship; but, I tell you to your face, she prefers me to such a milk-and-water specimen of a man as you are. What can you want with women, who daren't look a girl in the face the whole time you were at Oxford?"

"Robert Howard!" said Harry; "speak another word, and I'll fell you to the earth."

"*You fell me?*"

"Yes—and I'll thrash you in five minutes to your heart's content;—I've done that before, and I can do it again."

"We are not at school now, Master Harry, and pistols are the weapons of gentlemen."

"I am quite aware of that fact, Mr. Howard," sarcastically added Harry, "but I should like to take the conceit out of you a little first, by spoiling your good looks. Dare to give me

another insolent word, and I am just in the humour to damage that pretty nose and mouth of yours."

Robert, though no coward, knew Harry too well to doubt his intentions. The look of haughty defiance was in his eye; and he had seldom seen him so excited. He knew, moreover, Harry's prowess, and dreaded the effects of a black eye, which he felt sure he meant to favour him with—so, lowering his tone, he said—

"I am sorry to have offended you with my remarks; but it's not worth while for two old friends like we are, quarrelling about any girl."

"As you please, Robert; but no more of your impertinence. Though not so handsome as you are, I am not your inferior in any other respect, and I will only add, that the woman who can seriously accept your addresses, is not likely to become my wife;" saying which, he wished him good morning.

Harry's feelings were exceedingly lacerated by this interview with his cousin; but he knew

him too well, to give entire credence to all he had asserted respecting Miss Maitland. Yet he thought there must be some truth in it, as John Power had made similar remarks, and he was too cool and observant to be easily deceived. Under these circumstances, he evinced no hurry to present himself at Elm Grove, well knowing that the news of his return would soon reach the young lady's ears.

But it was not long before Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn, meeting Harry in one of their usual drives, pressed him so much to dine with them on a certain day, when several young neighbours were invited also, that he could not well refuse; and to speak the truth, Harry rather wished for the opportunity of witnessing (more unobserved, as he thought, in a large party) the conduct of the young girl, in whom he had hitherto taken so deep an interest.

The greater part of the company had assembled, on the evening of this dinner party, before Harry made his appearance in the drawing-room, when passing with a low bow Miss Maitland,

who was conversing in a lively tone of voice with his cousin Robert, he instantly made his way to the mistress of the house, with whom he cordially shook hands, and then addressed himself in like manner to those with whom he was acquainted. He did not, however, approach the part of the room in which Miss Maitland was seated near Robert; but one furtive glance stolen in that direction, revealed to him her altered look and manner. She was now more reserved, and seemingly heedless of Robert's soft speeches, and soon after she rose from his side.

Among the party here assembled, Harry recognized Miss Dundonald, an old friend of Miss Maitland's, who was often visiting at Elm Grove. She was a most agreeable and well-informed person, by several years Miss Maitland's senior, and although not handsome, of prepossessing appearance and most amiable disposition. Harry, seeing a vacant chair near her, crossed the room and sat down by her side.

"Why, Mr. Howard," she said, "you are

quite a stranger here now ; we began to think we should never see you again."

"And had that been the case, few of my fair friends would have shed a tear for the loss of Harry Howard."

"Oh, say not so—you do yourself injustice ; but, as I see you are seeking for a compliment, I shall not gratify your vanity by adding more—I at least am glad to welcome you again, and I think I may answer for another also."

"Many thanks," said Harry, "for your good opinion, which I value highly ; but I hear you have been very gay lately, and that your young friend has been rendering herself rather conspicuous by her flirtations with Mr. Robert Howard."

"Pray, Mr. Howard, may I ask who has given you this information?"

"Oh, certainly—himself ; and he went a point beyond that, by telling me the other day that he could obtain her hand by merely asking for it."

"Oh, the vanity of that man !" exclaimed Miss Dundonald. "I shall certainly tell Miss



Maitland what you say, and put her on her guard."

"Do no such thing, I beg; she has a right to please herself, and flirt with any one she fancies."

"She is not a flirt, Mr. Howard—never has been, and I hope never will be."

"May your opinion of her prove correct—for in my eyes a flirt of either sex is——"

"What, Mr. Howard?"

"Heartless—but dinner I see is announced; will you allow me to offer you my arm?"

Robert, the moment he saw the butler enter the room, dashed at once across to Miss Maitland, and John Power, who was sitting near her, immediately gave way, thinking of course she would prefer his arm.

It so happened, that, at the dinner-table, the two quondam friends, now rivals, if not foes, were seated opposite each other, with their fair companions, although partially screened by an epergne which occupied the centre of the table. Robert was rattling away in his usual style, or rather

trying to surpass it, to annoy Harry by endeavouring to engross the attention of Miss Maitland, and make her laugh at his lively sallies. This once, however, his ill-timed levity passed almost unnoticed. She made few responses, and John Power, who was seated next to her, seeing there was something wrong, ventured to put in a word or two occasionally, which being well received, he drew her into a more general conversation, glad of the opportunity of annoying the *Lady-killer*, as he called Robert, who had cut him out more than once with his partners at balls and parties.

Harry's glances were directed frequently across the table to where Miss Maitland sat ; their eyes met once, and the look she gave him so soft, yet so melancholy, pierced Harry to the heart. He mentally murmured,—

“I may have been too severe on that sweet girl. She is young and thoughtless ; but that perhaps is all.”


Miss Dundonald noticed Harry's abstraction, and his stolen glances across the table, and with

a woman's quick perception instantly divining the cause, playfully remarked—

“I fear, Mr. Howard, you have left your heart behind you at your friend's house in Hampshire.”

“Do you seriously think so?” inquired Harry, with his eyes bent full upon her face, with a searching look.

No answer was returned. Other topics of conversation were then introduced, and Harry was himself again. The dinner hour passed, and the signal was given for the ladies to retire. After the gentlemen had discussed the usual quantum of wine, politics, &c., an adjournment was proposed to the drawing-room. Harry observed Miss Maitland sitting with her friend on the sofa, and from their rather confused looks, when his eyes rested upon them, he guessed the reason. Miss Dundonald had been recounting his observation to her before dinner about her flirtation with Robert, which both annoyed and pained her; and she had just been saying she thought it very hard to be condemned so un-



justly as a flirt, merely because she had been amused with Mr. Howard's witticisms.

"He is certainly very handsome and very agreeable," replied Miss Dundonald; "but, my dear Mary, he is a decided flirt, and he has gone too far, I conclude, by speaking of you, as he did to his cousin the other day. That is a liberty no man should take with any girl, unless fully assured of her affections."

"Oh! I see, you are taking Mr. Henry Howard's part."

"And justly so, my dear girl; he is, in my opinion, a much more estimable character than the other; but here he comes. I shall leave *you* to lecture him if you think proper;" saying which, and before her friend could detain her, she left her seat on the sofa, which Harry, with a look of kind meaning to Miss Dundonald, instantly occupied. Both were silent for a second or two, when Harry broke the ice by some common-place remark; others succeeded, but Miss Maitland's reserve did not wear off. He talked of his journey into Hampshire.

"She hoped he had been amused."

"Oh, very much so," replied Harry; "and I hear also you have had very gay doings at Elm Grove."

"Nothing very particular, only a few rather pleasant dinner-parties, with some friends occasionally calling, to wile away the mornings, with music and singing."

"Among whom I have heard," added Harry, very testily, "my cousin Robert has been the most constant and conspicuous."

"Well, Mr. Howard, he is very agreeable, you must admit, and a great favourite with papa and mamma."

"And with their fair daughter also, I am told," added Harry.

"Perhaps not so great a favourite with her as you may imagine, Mr. Howard; but still I like him very much as an acquaintance, who helps to wile away a dull morning in the country."

"He is a dangerous companion, and I am sorry to see him on such intimate terms with you."

“Why, Mr. Howard, I always thought he was a very particular friend, as well as cousin, of yours. He talks of you as such, although admitting your tastes and his are rather dissimilar.”

“Dissimilar ! the poles are not more wide apart than the thoughts, words, and actions of Robert and Harry Howard. Schoolfellows we have been, fellow collegians, cousins, and neighbours also, but friends never, and never can be. Although engaged to another, as he certainly is, he yet tries to ensnare the affections of every young and thoughtless girl he meets with, and would sacrifice whole hecatombs of such, upon the altar of his insatiable vanity ; forgive my warmth of expression, Miss Maitland ! I would save you from being the dupe of one more dangerous than Mr. Macneil ; but I see and hear enough to convince me the time when Harry Howard was looked upon as a friend has passed away ;” saying which, he rose abruptly and turned to another part of the room, where John Power was standing.

Miss Maitland was vexed and unhappy ; she felt now she had gone rather too far, and by her coldness to Harry had pained one whom she had every reason to respect and admire. Music was now introduced, and Robert, anxious again to regain his lost ground, approached Miss Maitland, requesting she would favour him with a song. To this she pleaded a slight cold, and begged to be excused that evening. Robert, however, persisted in his suit, and Mrs. Selwyn overhearing him, said—

“Come, Mary, sing my favourite song.”

“Indeed, mamma, I cannot sing to-night.”

“Well, then, my dear, only one verse ;—you cannot refuse me that.”

Mary rose at once, Robert most obsequiously following her to the piano. Her heart was, however, too full ; her voice faltered with emotion, and at the end of the first verse she abruptly quitted her seat, which her friend, Miss Dundonald, who was by her side, immediately occupied, and finished the song for her. John Power and Harry were not inattentive

observers of what was passing, the former remarking—

“I am right glad that fellow Robert has got his *quietus* to-night. She does not fancy his flummery now, any way, Harry, perhaps because you are in the room.”

“Very likely. I feel I am one *de trop* to-night, and looked upon as a Marplot, but it shall not happen again just yet; the coast shall be clear for the future to Robert, or any other pretender. The hunting season has now commenced, and a few good gallops will soon disperse the blues.”

“Ah, my boy, that’s the time of day—Diana’s the goddess for me!”

The party soon after broke up, Harry shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn, and approaching Miss Maitland, said in a subdued tone of voice—

“Forgive my obtrusiveness this evening—I will not offend you again by offering my advice,” and passed on before she could reply.

On reaching her room, Mary Maitland burst into tears.



“Oh, how cold and distant he has become, who I always thought would prove my friend and supply the place of my dear cousin; he, at least, would not have treated me thus.”

Indulging in such melancholy reflections, she was aroused by a knock at the door, and Miss Dundonald's voice begging to be admitted. She at once detected the traces of her friend's tears, and guessing the cause, said—

“My dear Mary, you have pained yourself as well as another, more than you suppose, by your distant behaviour to him to-night.”

“Well, but I did not choose to be lectured like a school-girl, and he spoke so rudely of his cousin, Mr. Howard, that although no particular friend of mine, I could not refrain from taking his part. If mamma sees no impropriety in my conduct to him, why should Mr. Harry Howard?”

“Your mamma, my dear, sees Mr. Howard in his holiday dress only, and is not aware that he is already engaged; but men soon find out each other's real characters. Would you seri-

ously exchange Harry Howard's warm and manly feelings, for Robert Howard's plausible addresses?"

"What do I know more, Lucy, of Mr. Henry Howard's feelings to me?"

"Enough to satisfy me, if not yourself, my dear friend; and lookers-on, you know, see more than those concerned."

"Perhaps he would only play with my feelings, as he represents his cousin's intentions to be."

"A hint of Mr. Robert Howard's, I suppose; but with one observation more, my dear Mary, I shall leave you for the night. I have lived many years longer in the world than you have, and have studied men's characters deeply; more than that, I have once hopelessly loved." A pause ensued for a few seconds, when she added, with a trembling voice, "If Harry Howard does not love you to his heart's core, then I have no faith in man's physiognomy."

"Oh, say not so, dearest Lucy; then how cruelly have I treated him this evening; I can-

not bear to think of it. But your conjectures are still conjectures only."

"They are more than that, Mary, or would never have found utterance from me, so good night, my dear girl;" and kissing her, she left the room.

## CHAPTER XI.

WHAT were Harry's sensations when tossing to and fro on his restless pillow that night? Words can scarcely describe them. His confidence abused, his friendship slighted, his advice despised, himself repulsed, and a flirt preferred. The idol of pure and unalloyed gold which he had raised and sanctified in the temple of his heart, was at once dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel. Harry now knew and felt he loved; but the discovery came almost too late. The accounts he had heard of Mary's flirting with Robert, which seemed confirmed almost to his own sight, when first entering the drawing-room

that evening, struck like daggers to his heart. "Oh, Mary! Mary! that one short month should have effected such a change in that pure heart! but now thou art lost to me perhaps for ever!" The perspiration stood in large drops on poor Harry's forehead, and he groaned aloud—sleep was out of the question. He arose from his bed and paced the room in sad and gloomy abstraction; then feeling more composed, knelt down and prayed for strength of mind to himself, and protection from evil for Mary Maitland.

With the assistance of John Power and a few other young men of the neighbourhood, who were sadly in want of some other winter amusement than lounging up and down the streets of Bath, Harry had been induced to get together a few couples of foxhounds (as no pack regularly hunted the country), the management of which he undertook, and this was to be the commencement of their first season. Harry therefore busied himself in preparations, which gave employment to his time and relief to his mind,

resolving, if possible, to forget Mary Maitland. For three months he never even entered the doors of Elm Grove, neither could any invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn induce him to do so. He was always engaged somehow or somewhere ; for his resolution being once made, he was inflexible. Harry thought he had been entirely mistaken in his opinion of Miss Maitland's character, and his thorough detestation of a flirt at first steeled his heart against her ; but forget her he could not, and he determined still to watch over and save her, if possible, from the insidious addresses of Robert.

About this time a cousin of Harry's was staying on a visit at his father's house, with whom he was in the habit of riding, and the greater portion of his spare time was devoted to her amusement. Neighbours, of course, were not long in coming to the conclusion that Harry's constant rides with his cousin could only end in one way, but this was very far from Harry's real intentions.

Still the report prevailed, and soon was con-

veyed to Miss Maitland's ears. The effect it produced upon her may be gathered from a *tête-à-tête* between Miss Dundonald and herself.

"Oh, Lucy," exclaimed the latter, "this news confirms my worst fears ; you see, now, he is going to be married to his cousin. Oh, Lucy ! you have encouraged me with false hopes, and I am truly miserable. For three long months he has never even called here, and from all quarters I hear of his devoted attentions to his cousin."

"And yet," Lucy said, "my woman's faith has never wavered ; Harry Howard loves you still. He was vexed and justly offended at your cool treatment that unfortunate night, and thinks, perhaps, not without good cause, that you prefer his cousin ; but still he will be, and is, yours only. The Bath season is now at hand, we shall meet him at some balls and parties, and I will wring the secret from his heart ; till then, my dear Mary, pray do not yield to despondency."

The time had now arrived for Mary Maitland's first introduction to the *beau monde*—

young, beautiful, modest, and sweet-tempered, she was very generally admired, and several suitors had already entered the lists for her hand. Harry heard of the impression she had made, and it must be confessed a jealous feeling shot through his heart. A grand dramatic ball being the general topic of conversation among the gay circles, Harry had offered to escort his cousin there. The eventful evening arrived, and amid a galaxy of beauty seldom before witnessed in the gay city of waters, they entered the theatre, the pit of which was boarded over level with the stage. A short comedy (by amateur performers) preceded the opening of the ball, after which dancing immediately commenced.

Harry observed his fair neighbour looking more lovely than ever, dancing with a handsome-looking man just opposite to where he was then standing. All his former feelings returned at once with beating violence to his heart, and he feared he had condemned her too hastily. When she crossed over near to him, and stood for a



moment disengaged, Harry proffered his hand, which was accepted, and asked her to dance with him.

"The next quadrille," she replied, "I am engaged, but the following one I shall be most happy."

"Will you, then, stand our *vis-à-vis* in the next?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "if possible, in such a crowd."

The quadrille being over, Harry watched her with intense anxiety, until she was joined by a Captain Dundas, who, offering his arm, led her forward. Harry quickly followed, and knowing the Captain slightly, proposed their standing opposite, but he very soon repented his position. The Captain's attentions were most marked, and the apparently cheerful and gay manner in which they were received by Miss Maitland vexed Harry to the soul. He had been reported as one of the suitors for her hand, and here was damning proof before Harry's own eyes that *he* at least, could scarcely plead in vain.

Captain Dundas was handsome in person, gentlemanly in appearance, of easy and polite manners, and very winning in his address, which, under a scarlet jacket, with all the gay trappings of a dragoon regiment, would render him, as Harry thought, quite irresistible to a young and artless girl like Mary Maitland. He appeared moreover evidently on familiar terms with her, and Harry augured the worst.

“Oh! what a fool I have been,” said he to himself; “but it cannot now be helped—and still, if she ever loved me truly, as I did her, she must feel as I do—she could never love another—otherwise it matters not.”

The quadrille over, Harry resigned his own partner to her aunt’s care, and then eagerly sought Miss Maitland. Captain Dundas was walking with her round the room, and in various directions, evidently intending to keep her to himself during the next dance, and trying to avoid Harry’s meeting with them; but the eagle eye of our fox-hunter was not so easily to be foiled. Seeing the direction they were

taking, he met them suddenly at an angle, and there cut off all further retreat.

Harry's arm was politely offered, when he naively said, "Now, Miss Maitland, as you have deprived me of half my dance (the quadrille having already begun), I will with pleasure accompany you in your survey of the scenes which you were taking with Captain Dundas, and we will dance the next quadrille instead."

"Oh," she said, "for that I am again engaged to Captain Dundas."

"That cannot hold good now," replied Harry, coolly, "as he has prevented me the pleasure of dancing this quadrille with you, I shall return the compliment—that's only fair play—independent of which, it is not considered etiquette for any young lady to dance twice on the same evening with the same partner; it looks too particular, unless they are on most familiar terms."

Miss Maitland was silent, but she thought his beginning again to give her advice was a proof his affections had not been, as she imagined, wholly estranged from her. — Harry

pressed the arm of his beautiful companion to his side, with the feelings of one who had just recovered a long lost, but dearly prized treasure. The glow of pleasure and look of proud satisfaction beamed on his manly features, as he threaded his way through the motley crowd dressed in costumes of the whole universe.

In passing along, cordial greetings and outstretched hands met Harry at every turn, from old and young alike, which convinced his fair partner of the estimation in which he was held. Miss Maitland was more than gratified, she felt proud also of her companion. The first feelings of delight having passed, a fit of gloomy abstraction seized on Harry for a few minutes, as he ran over in his mind how they had last parted, and how they had again met, when she interrupted his cogitations by observing, "I fear you are not well, Mr. Howard?"

"Why," he said, "the heat of the room makes me feel rather uncomfortable. I had a hard day's work yesterday, and a spill to finish with, and this thick head dress oppresses me,

but it will soon pass off. I see the dance is nearly over, and time for us to take our places."

"Oh no," she said, "I do not care about dancing; we can find a seat in the boxes, where you can rest a little."

This proposal suited Harry exactly. He led her to a seat in the second tier, from whence the glare of the chandeliers was excluded, and there sat down by her side. Harry's hand shook, his lips quivered, and his voice also faltered as he addressed her. Miss Maitland became alarmed.

"You are really ill, Mr. Howard, I fear; what can I do for you?"

"Oh, nothing; I shall soon be better."

Harry, by an effort, recovered his self-possession, and began talking fast on common subjects—the ball, &c., and then made enquiries after her father and mother, whom he did not see there that evening.

"They are quite well," she replied, "but you know they do not like balls or very large parties, and therefore I came with Miss Dundonald

and her father to-night ; but for three long months, Mr. Howard, you have never even called at Elm Grove, and they fear you must have taken offence at something they have done."

"By no means," returned Harry.

"Then what has been the cause of your absence, if I may venture on such a question? Have I offended you?"

Harry was silent.

Miss Maitland paused for a moment, and then added, "I hope, Mr. Howard, with his former candour, will at least explain how."

"Yes, Miss Maitland, Mr. Howard will." He then alluded to what he had before told her, at their last dinner-party, of her flirtation with Robert, and the cold, repulsive manner with which she had received his well-intended advice. "From that night I felt we were friends no longer," concluded Harry, with a deep sigh. "Heaven only knows how pure and sincere my intentions were towards you, to guard your fair name from even the breath of scandal ; but you

have too many friends and admirers now ever to bestow another thought, or regard the friendship of poor Harry Howard; it has all passed away as a dream of the night, and I am——” here a choking sensation stopped his further utterance, and he turned away, to conceal his emotion.

“Oh, Mr. Howard, you have indeed pained me more than I can express. Could you think me so ungrateful for all your past kindness?”

“Oh, tell me then, Miss Maitland, has another yet occupied that place which Harry Howard once held?”

“Oh, never, never, he is my dear brother still.”

“Thank God!” ejaculated Harry, fervently, “for that confession.”

In an ecstasy of delight he pressed her hand in his, and felt that pressure was returned. “Now,” he said, “I am all right again, and can dance like a merry andrew as I am, to-night. Two quadrilles must I have with you, nothing less will suit my humour.”

"Oh, but you know," archly observed Miss Maitland, "it is not etiquette."

"Ah! you have me there; but you forget my saving clause, unless the parties are on the most familiar terms. *We* have long been friends and neighbours, you know, and once more brother and sister, I hope."

"But, I heard you were engaged to be married to your cousin?"

"Indeed!" said Harry, "and pray who gave you that likely piece of information?"

"All the world says so, and her aunt confirms it."

"We like each other very much as cousins," added Harry, "and I have endeavoured to make her visit as agreeable as I can, ours being a dull house for ladies, but we are not in love with each other. The world says also, that you are engaged to that fascinating Captain of Dragoons, who has been paying you so much attention this evening. Does the world speak truth in that case?" enquired Harry, rather uneasily.

"As much as in yours. When you give



your hand to your cousin, I may bestow mine on Captain Dundas, but not perhaps even in that case."

"You appeared, however, much taken with him, and were laughing and in high good humour when I first observed you."

"Yes, I like him very much as an acquaintance—he is a very agreeable companion at balls and parties, but nothing more to me."

Harry was satisfied.

They now descended into the vast arena below, where the sets of quadrilles had been already formed, and no vacancy appearing, Harry suggested they should take a glass of champagne first, and then a survey of the dancers. There was Robert, flirting away as usual, with one of the prettiest girls in the room, who was evidently taking in his fine speeches, as so many proofs of his devoted affection.

"Look at your friend Robert, Miss Maitland; he is at his old game again, you see, lady-killing. Do you know who his partner is?"

"Yes, Lady Katherine L——."

“ Ah ! I thought Robert looked more puffed up with vanity than usual—another victim—poor girl, I pity her.”

“ Well, but all young ladies will not give their hearts so readily as you imagine ; they may be flattered by his attentions, without serious thoughts of going further. I fear you have a poor opinion of women generally.”

“ They are easily taken by the attentions of a handsome man, and trust too much to outward appearances. They have no means, you know, of discerning men’s real characters.”

“ Well, perhaps not ; but then they ought to exercise more circumspection — a woman should never marry without at least one year’s acquaintance with her intended partner for life. Matrimony is a serious business.”

They were interrupted in their dialogue by John Power, tapping Harry on the back, with “ by Jove ! Harry, your mother would scarcely know you in this disguise. That large turban, with those fierce black moustaches, and scyme-

ter by your side—what a fire-eating monster you look. Is he not quite killing, Miss Maitland, to-night?”

“ Oh, quite,” she gaily answered.

“ Egad ! I thought so. He beats the uniforms into fits”—with another sly look. “ Those red jacket gentlemen, with their fine trimmings, are no match for Harry the Turk.”

“ Come, John, no more of your nonsense, or you will catch a Tartar yourself.”

“ No fear of that, Harry ; but you should see him, Miss Maitland, in his bit of pink, my favourite costume, on a fine hunting morning, and hear his ‘ You wind him, my boys ! ’ as his darlings dash into cover ; and then when the fox is found, and away—riding over gates and hedges, as if the—no—a *lady* drove him. He is quite a killing fellow then, I can assure you, and so those wily foxes find to their cost. But for the last three months, the fiend of what I won’t just now say, has taken entire possession of him ; he rides as if he tried to break his neck, he does, indeed, Miss Maitland, and

Harry Howard would be a sad loss among his male, if not his female friends—so pray give him a little good advice—he'll attend to it from you, I warrant,"—with a knowing look at Miss Maitland, — "won't you, Harry, like a good boy?"

"Confound it, John, no more of this ; you have had a glass too much to-night."

"More likely a bottle ; but for all that, I'm as sober as a judge now. Good bye, Harry, and don't forget the lecture, Miss Maitland ; it's all in *his* way, you know."

Saying which, John Power disappeared.

Captain Dundas, who had overheard some of John Power's remarks, now approached, and with rather a formal bow, said he believed he had been promised the honour of Miss Maitland's hand for the next quadrille.

"I think not, Captain Dundas," replied Harry ; "you have had your turn, and it is now mine. Miss Maitland has not danced with me once to-night, and she is my partner for the next set."

“May I petition for the succeeding one, then, Miss Maitland?”

“For that I am also engaged, I believe,” added she.

“Oh, may I ask to whom?” he rather pointedly enquired.

“That I am not obliged to tell you;” was the like cool reply, with which the Captain walked off, casting a fierce look at Harry, which was returned with interest.

A waltz, however, being the next dance on the card, the objections to which Harry was discussing with his young friend, and had just concluded some good advice on the subject, by declaring he would never marry a girl who waltzed, when the Captain seeing them looking on, and knowing Harry never engaged in that dance, thought it a good opportunity to have his revenge, by carrying off his partner to Harry’s discomfiture. Again presenting himself, Captain Dundas said—

“You are not engaged for this dance, I see Miss Maitland, therefore I may now fairly claim

your hand for a few turns in this enchanting circle."

"I do not waltz, Captain Dundas."

"Then, pray, let me be your instructor—it is so delightful, only one turn—I am sure you will like it."

"You have had my answer, Captain Dundas," she replied ; and Harry, pressing her arm to his side, turned with her in another direction.

The Captain was discomfited, and perceived at once the influence Harry possessed over this young and beautiful girl, whose affections he had flattered himself (until this night) he was in a fair way of securing.

"Confound his impudence!" said Harry ; "but I know something more of that fine peacock than he fancies—now I remember we were at the same college together, for a short time. His haughty looks won't pass current with me."

"I hope," said Miss Maitland, "you know nothing to his disparagement."

"Nor much to his credit—but he is not a

person I should like to see on very intimate terms with you, my fair sister."

"Well," she said, "I will be more distant, for the future ; but, you see, I have much needed your friendly advice on many points."

"You shall never need that more now ;—but, perhaps, you will soon be tired of such a prosy particular fellow as Harry Howard."

"When I am—I will candidly tell you."

They now enjoyed their quadrille together, as mutual confidence was once more restored. An old college friend, who had been watching Harry's movements the whole evening, himself entertaining certain views of conquest over his fair partner, approaching him, said—"I see how the land lies, Harry, and I suppose I must ask your permission to dance with Miss Maitland."

"Why, not exactly that," said Harry ; "but though engaged to me the next quadrille also, I will waive that in favour of an old friend, provided she consents."

This was said to avoid further remarks, as he was aware he had been monopolizing Mary

rather more than might be deemed prudent, although, with the usual blindness of a lover, he had thought his attentions might have escaped observation in such a crowd.

This arrangement being acceded to, and the hour being now a very late or rather early one, the gay throng began to disperse, and Harry and his fair companion parted, with light and cheerful hearts.



## CHAPTER XII.

SWEET and peaceful was the sleep of Mary Maitland, as she laid her wearied head on her pillow that night. Her doubts and fears of the last three months had all passed away. She felt she still retained the affections of the only man whose good opinion she so highly valued. And as for Harry Howard, he was in a perfect transport of delight.

“Yes,” he repeated, “still so beautiful, so pure minded and affectionate, and as dear to me as ever. Oh! thank Heaven, for this most undeserved blessing of that dear girl’s love. I have wronged her by my doubts and suspicions—but never again will I doubt her more.”

Excess of joy however, like excess of gri



often produces a similar effect. Harry could not at first rest from over-excitement; but, at last utterly exhausted, nature gave way, and his slumbers were protracted to a very late hour. When he awoke it was midday, but having engaged a room in Bath that night, he thought, after breakfast, in common politeness he should inquire after Miss Maitland, feeling as well, that he long owed a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn. Contrary to his expectations, he found all three at home; and after having explained, as he best could, his long absence from Elm Grove, he soon found himself reinstated on his usual good footing, and was invited to their house whenever he visited Bath.

After a long chat, finding Mrs. Selwyn disinclined to give him any opportunity of a *tête-à-tête* with her daughter, Henry reluctantly took his leave. As he turned his back on the gay city that evening, his reflections on the last night's event were at first full of gratification and delight. He recalled every word Miss Maitland had uttered, and felt now assured he

had regained the place in her affections he feared he had lost for ever. And yet, perhaps, she loved him as a brother only—it might never amount to anything more. There was pain as well as pleasure in that reflection. Again, a pang of jealousy shot through his heart when he brought to mind the attentions of Captain Dundas. “Still,” he thought, “it is best as we now are, for the present.” His father’s intentions that he should enter some profession, made him think more seriously on the subject, and he knew full well marriage must not enter into his calculations for some few years at least. Prudence and principle alike prevented him binding her by any formal engagement, even should Miss Maitland accept him as her affianced lover, of which, at present, he entertained some doubts; and he determined, with the feelings of an honourable mind, on the first opportunity, to make her more fully acquainted with his prospects in life.

At that time there were public assemblies every week, and Harry thought it probable he

should meet Miss Maitland there at the following one; when he resolved frankly to explain his situation and dependance on his father, not with a view of pressing his suit further just then, but that she might be fully aware of his real position and prospects.

Harry's expectation of meeting his fair neighbour at the next ball was not disappointed. On entering the room, in which several hundreds were already assembled, he observed her, looking, if possible, more lovely than ever, dancing with Captain Dundas. Harry's features suddenly changed at this unpleasant discovery. He felt hurt and offended, after what he had said to her on the last occasion; and on passing her and being recognized, a blush overspread Miss Maitland's face and mounted even to her brow, which Harry returned by a distant and low bow. Captain Dundas, noticing Harry's manner, darted on him a look of triumph, which he returned with one of utter contempt. Being in no humour just then for dancing, he took his station on a platform near the fire-place,

where he could see at one view, all that was going on in the body of the room, and with folded arms and compressed lips he gazed on the scene below. Dance succeeded dance, and for every one was the hand of Mary Maitland engaged. She appeared lively and gloomy by turns, as Harry's keen eye rested upon her, scrutinizing every look and gesture. Friends and acquaintances passed by him frequently, with whom he exchanged short greetings; but being more taciturn than usual, Power, among the rest, observed him in this attitude of defiance, and said—

“Harry, you are as gloomy as a monk to-night—what's the matter?”

“Only a splitting headache, John.”

“Heartache most likely, Harry—but come along,” taking his arm, “don't stand here any longer like a statue. Every one has noticed you——”

“So let them,” replied he, walking away with a haughty air.

“By Jove! Harry,” rejoined Power, “you are

in a most amiable humour this evening, and all, I'll warrant, because that sweet girl has been dancing with the Captain—I saw the look you gave him.”

“Pho—pho! John.”

“That fellow is a good shot, and will pink you, my boy, if you don't take care.”

“Let him try then,” said Harry.

“Put your ill-humour in your pocket—come and ask her to dance; you will soon turn the tables on him.”

“Not I, John Power.”

“Then I'll ask her myself for this dance, and engage her for the next to you.”

“You shall do no such thing.”

“But I will, Master Harry;” and before he could detain him, John Power slipped away.

Harry turned in another direction; but when the music struck up, he cast a look on the dancers, and there was John Power standing by her side, and in animated conversation with Miss Maitland.

Power kept his word, for he was really inte-

rested in Harry's happiness, and did what he thought a true friend ought to do, in effecting a reconciliation. Power watched Harry's movements, and seeing him occupy a seat, as soon as the quadrille was over, took him rather by surprise by blocking up his only means of escape, with his fair partner hanging on his arm. Harry rose, and in common politeness offered her his hand.

"It's all right, Harry," said Power, "and, as you have been in such a low desponding mood to-night, very bad I fear, I have engaged Miss Maitland for the next dance, to raise your spirits;" and casting a meaning look on both, bowed and left them together.

Miss Maitland was the first to break the ice, by saying, in a sympathizing tone,—

"Mr. Power tells me you are very unwell to-night, and he fears labouring under a very dangerous complaint. I hope such is not the case; but I have noticed you looked very pale and ill this evening, and you have never asked me even for one dance."

"Did Power seriously tell you this?" inquired Harry, very gravely.

"Yes, indeed; and, he added he knew you were attacked often by sudden palpitations of the heart."

"Hang that fellow!" thought Harry, "he has betrayed me." But Miss Maitland dissipated that impression, by adding—

"Perhaps the exertion of dancing may prove too much for you to-night; shall we take a turn in the card-room instead?"

Harry assented; but the demon of jealousy was working at his heart, as he thought of the Captain, and he could not resist its impulse, when that individual passed them with a self-satisfied and familiar sort of look, directed at her, which she appeared to return.

"Oh, I see, Captain Dundas has been forgiven his impertinence, and restored to your favour as usual," said he, in an offended tone.

"I cannot be rude to him," she replied very quietly, "as he visits at our house; and being disengaged, I danced one quadrille with him—



more I do not intend ; but you appear to have taken a great dislike to him."

"We are not likely to be friends," said Harry, "and people are generally judged by the company they keep."

Miss Maitland appeared hurt and offended by this ill-humoured and rude remark, reflecting as she thought, upon herself, and remained silent.

Harry saw he had gone too far. "Forgive my impertinent remarks," he quickly added, "they were not intended to apply to you, save in the way of caution. I have before expressed my opinion of Captain Dundas—that shall suffice, and the subject shall never again be renewed by me. Friendship may go too far, and advice, like physic, prove disagreeable to the taste."

"Your friendship," she said, "I value so highly, that I forgive your unkind remarks, knowing the interest you have ever taken in me."

"Well, well," he said, "I am sadly out of humour and spirits to-night—that man's cha-

racter I do not like; and he hates me, I know full well;—but I shall now ask *your* advice, if you will give it me, after what has passed.”

“Most willingly, if competent to do so.”

Harry then entered into a full explanation of his prospects in life, telling her, that although his father had good possessions, yet that he wished him to find occupation in some profession, instead of leading an idle life—and having two livings in his gift, pressed him to become a clergyman.

“Well,” she said, “why should you not comply with his wishes?—it is a most honourable profession, and confers the power of doing good almost to an unlimited extent. I am sure it would suit your feelings in that respect.”

“Yes,” he said, “that is quite true, but that is not all—it is a most serious and responsible vocation, and I have scruples which I cannot quite overcome. However, a ball-room is not a fit place for discussions of this nature; we will talk of it another time.”

It soon after struck the hour of twelve, when

the dancing ceased, and Harry having handed his partner to her carriage, they parted—once more, on good terms.

Harry Howard felt quite relieved after the explanation he had given Miss Maitland. She now knew his position and prospects, and he could not be accused of withholding from her any of these particulars. Whether her affection for him would continue the same, and what the true nature of that affection might be, was now left for future events to determine.

A few days after, Harry met an old Oxford friend, who had just entered the church, and as he had always been intended for that profession, for which, by his really christian disposition and most exemplary conduct when at the University, he was most particularly fitted, Harry thought this a good opportunity of eliciting his friend's views and opinions on that most sacred calling. A long and severe examination followed. Mr. Goodman condemned most severely the too constant practice of young men entering the church merely as a profession or means of subsistence.

"It is true," he said, "that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and the ministers of the gospel, who dispense spiritual things, are entitled in return to your carnal things for their support ; but St. Peter says, 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.' In our church ordination service also, the question asked deacons is very impressive and searching, 'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory and the edifying of his people?' "

Goodman cited other texts to show that no man should lightly or irreverently undertake the ministry of the gospel ; and Harry felt so convinced by his arguments, as to resign at that time all further intentions of entering into holy orders.

About a fortnight after this conversation, Harry received an invitation to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn, of which he gladly availed

himself. The dinner-party was rather select (as a dance was to take place afterwards), and he had a good opportunity, from some observations made at table, of recalling to Miss Maitland the conversation they had commenced at the rooms about his taking orders, and the strong opinions expressed by his friend on the subject, by which his former scruples had been confirmed.

"With such convictions," she said, "you are right, perhaps, in declining to adopt the church as a profession, unless your ideas should undergo a change."

"But what, then, do you recommend—the army or the law?"

"Certainly not the latter," she replied; "and as to the former, although my father and many of my family were soldiers, I can scarcely wish to see you in the profession of arms."

"May I ask why?" Harry inquired.

"I can hardly give you my reasons now," she replied, with a slight blush.

"Oh do," said Harry.

"Why," she said, in a low voice, "I might lose my brother."

"Well, then, would your brother be the same to you in a black coat as in a red one?"

"Oh, just the same."

Harry asked no more questions.

The Bath season was now drawing to a close, and Harry, hearing Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn's intentions of paying a round of visits to their friends and to town during the summer, had prepared a little present as a token of remembrance to his dearly-loved sister on that evening. Upon returning to the drawing-room, therefore, he called her attention into the adjoining room, to examine some scrap books, a print in one reminding him of a sporting acquaintance. She at once accompanied him, and when looking over the book in a retired part of the room, he produced a pretty little ivory fan, and giving it into her hand, said—

"Will you accept this little token of Harry's regard?—It is of small value, but may, perhaps, remind you, during our long separation, of one

constant friend you have left behind. One little condition is attached to your acceptance of it," added Harry.

"And what is that?" she timidly inquired.  
"Can I accept it?"

"Simply this, when you meet with another who can hold a warmer place in your affections than Harry, return this fan to him broken in pieces."

"That is not very likely to happen," she said,  
"and I accept your gift with pleasure."

Mrs. Selwyn now approached. "Well, my dear, you and Mr. Howard have been a long time looking over the books. Have you found the character you wanted, Mr. Howard?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, with a fond glance at her daughter, "it is quite perfection."

"Well, I am glad to hear you have succeeded in your search; but the company are beginning to arrive, Mary, and you must help me to do the honours."

Amongst those who were invited this evening, were Captain Dundas and Robert Howard. The

former, with the tact of a man of the world, had ingratiated himself into Mrs. Selwyn's favour, who had always evinced a predilection for military men, from old associations ; which the Captain perceiving, turned to some account, and by his polite and flattering attentions, had already so far succeeded, that he had become a very frequent visitor at their house, and considered himself almost in the position of an accepted suitor for her daughter's hand. The first check to his ambitious views had been given at the Dramatic Fête, where he observed the marked attentions of Harry Howard, and the friendly manner in which they had been received ; certain insinuations also had been made by John Power, which tended to raise suspicions as to Harry's final intentions : he resolved, therefore, upon the first opportunity of their meeting again, to introduce himself to Harry as an old college acquaintance, and worm the secret out of him. This evening presented a fair opportunity for so doing ; and seeing Harry talking with John Power, he approached them.



"I think I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Howard about three years since, at Oxford?"

"Yes," replied Harry, "I believe I have had that honour."

"Then," added the Captain, "it will afford me very great pleasure to renew our acquaintance;" and his hand being offered, it was taken by Harry under the same feelings as those entertained by two pugilists when entering the roped arena, who think it necessary to undergo the ceremony of shaking hands before setting to in right good earnest to knock the breath or life out of each other's bodies. The Captain, knowing Harry's *penchant* for field sports, expatiated at considerable length on this topic; and then turning the conversation to the ladies, said—

"I see you are as great a favourite in the ball-room as in the field, and know the art of love-making as well as hunting."

"I am no flatterer," said Harry, "and never wish to appear otherwise than I am. To you, and such as you who are professed ladies' men, I leave all this soft and unmeaning language."

"Well," he replied, "you certainly can exercise a little influence sometimes over the fair sex, if I may judge by appearances. What think you of Miss Maitland? Is she not a most beautiful and sweet-tempered girl, and with what grace does she play her part of hostess to-night? Don't you consider her a most charming person?"

"Decidedly. I have known her long and intimately."

"Well, I thought so, and am told you have serious intentions in that quarter."

"Very likely," replied Harry, carelessly; "but the same is reported of Captain Dundas."

"Why, I will confess, I am over head and ears in love with her, and flatter myself"—(with a most complacent and satisfied air)—"that my affection is reciprocated."

"Indeed!" said Harry; "and pray, who occupies the proud position of *first* claimant on Captain Dundas's pure affections; Miss Maitland, or a certain dark-eyed young lady at No. 6, C—— Street?"

The Captain was doubled up by this sudden and well-directed blow, and quailed under Harry's indignant eye ; but soon recovering, answered in his usual off-hand manner—

“ Oh, that is a mere matter *de convenance*, *pour passer le temps*. When a man marries, he gives up those connections, as a matter of course.”

“ Perhaps so,” said Harry ; “ but you must excuse my remarking, that step does not *always* follow as a *matter of course*.”

“ Oh,” said he, “ women generally prefer gay men, and marry such often for the pleasure of reclaiming them.”

“ You have a great opinion of women's credulity,” replied Harry ; “ but from such a task as this, a young and pure-minded girl ought to be protected.”

“ Oh, I see,” said the Captain, “ you intend to cut me out if you can ; in short, you mean to marry Miss Maitland yourself.”

“ My secrets are best in my own keeping,” said Harry, and walked away.

From this conversation the Captain augured no good, and to be beforehand with Harry, resolved that night to propose to Miss Maitland, if an opportunity presented itself; he therefore watched them both when together very narrowly, and having succeeded in handing her down stairs to the supper-room, felt assured, from her manner to him, that nothing had as yet been divulged by Harry. So far all was right. The Captain's attentions were unremitting; pressing her to take wine, under the excuse of her great exertions that night, and taking good care to replenish his own glass freely, to nerve him for the occasion. Having engaged her hand for the next quadrille, he had resolved, on that occasion, to plead his cause, which, on returning to the dancing-room, was commenced with all the fervour and impassioned looks and words of a man well versed in such professions. It has been said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" this, however, does not hold good in all cases. True love is ever diffident, but the Captain's head was here as

much or more concerned than his heart. He loved her, it is true, with the love of the senses—passion—as he had loved other women before; but he loved money as well, having been assured she would possess a good fortune. This was the chief incentive to his urgent protestation of love and devotion. He was doomed to disappointment. Miss Maitland, although taken completely by surprise at first, quietly but firmly refused him. He would scarcely take a denial; hoped she would consider that his life was in her hands, with a great deal of such trash, and not doom him to despair. All his arts of persuasion proved unavailing. “Oh, then,” he said, “reserve your decision until another day.”

“No,” she replied, “you have it now—I shall never alter; we may be friends, but nothing further.”

“Then,” he added bitterly, “I know the cause of my rejection—you love Mr. Howard.”

She made no reply, but the bolt had struck home. This scene was unobserved by Harry, who was dancing in the adjoining room; but

John Power's eyes had been fixed upon the Captain ever since he quitted the supper room, where he remarked his unceasing attentions to Miss Maitland. "There's mischief brewing to-night," thought Power, in his usual calculating way. "I'll see this game out." He watched the Captain narrowly, though apparently deeply engaged with his own partner, and soon perceived, from his low and impressive tone of voice and manner, although suppressed as much as possible, that something serious was the subject of his address to his beautiful partner. Her changing colour confirmed his surmises, and from the last despairing look of the Captain, Power drew his final conclusion, that he had popped the question, and failed. The moment the quadrille was over, John sought his friend Harry, and whispered in his ear, "There is one knight less upon the list ; the Captain has run his tilt, and is *hors de combat*."

"What do you mean, John?"

"Only that he has urged his suit, and been rejected."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"But it's quite true; I guessed his move at supper-time, and resolved to see the game played out. He has lost it; a better chance now for you, my boy."

"Many thanks, John, for your kind interest in me."

"No man more welcome, Harry; but that girl is too good to be thrown away upon a dandified, philandering fellow like that, with a mistress, perhaps, in every town. No, no; let me see her the wife of an honest, manly, straightforward fox-hunter, and I shall be satisfied."

Harry joined Miss Maitland, and although aware of the cause of her altered and thoughtful look, did not appear to notice it, but with the true feelings of a delicate mind, endeavoured to divert her attention to other subjects. He asked many questions about their summer excursions, and how long she would be absent.

"You will doubtless visit many gay places, and see many gay people, who will throw plain Harry Howard into the shade; but you may,

perhaps, when using that fan, sometimes think of him in his solitude."

"Oh, do not doubt it," she said; "you have ever been my truest and kindest friend, and I shall long to be back again at Elm Grove."

"One little piece of advice I must give you ere we part. Look not to outward appearances; a bad heart is often concealed under the most polished and gay exterior. Remember the old and true saying, 'all is not gold that glitters;' those who feel the most, generally say the least. And now I must say farewell. May Heaven bless and protect you till we meet again;" saying which, he pressed her hand firmly, and departed, promising to call at Elm Grove before they left the country.



### CHAPTER XIII.

IT was a pleasant evening in May, when Harry was returning to Beechwood on foot, from Elm Grove, where he had just taken leave of Miss Maitland, previous to her departure, when sauntering leisurely along a green lane, he was accosted by one of the gipsy tribe, an old woman of nearly seventy, whose sun-burnt features still retained the traces of their youthful beauty.

“Will your honour cross my hand with a silver coin, and I will read your fortune?”

“Nay, my good woman,” replied Harry, good-humouredly, “here is a shilling, but my destiny, such as it may be, is as much a blank

page to you as to myself. Mortals cannot look into futurity."

"But they may divine things that will come to pass, were they to use wisely the knowledge they possess; it is sunshine now, but the threatening clouds that hang hovering over our heads will burst anon, with lightning and thunder."

"Perhaps so," said Harry, "therefore I must hurry forward."

"Stay, young sir," replied the woman, "and listen to my warning. There are storms raised by mortal hands, gathering round the head of one you would give your life to shelter."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry, "how so? Tell me how gained you this information, and who would dare to injure her, and more than thanks shall be your due; but mark me, no deception."

"Master Harry," replied the gipsy, "you and yours are well known to me and all my tribe, and many a shilling has your worthy father bestowed on my little grandchildren, when playing by your woodside, where our camp now lies, and where it has been pitched many years

past, when we visit this part of the country. Our wandering life makes us acquainted with many secrets."

"No doubt," said Harry, "but what of mine? or rather who are the enemies that threaten?"

"You know them well," replied the sybil. "The hawk that is scared from his prey by the fowler's gun, will return to his victim when the coast is clear. You stand in the path of one who ill brooks your interference, and will wreak his vengeance on her you have once rescued from his clutches."

"No more dark sayings," said Harry, impatiently, "but to the point at once. Speak freely and openly, here are no eaves-droppers."

"Be it so," said the woman. "There is a deserted hut on the Chilmark Downs, some twenty miles hence, hard by the turnpike-road on the top of the hill—"

"I know it well," replied Harry.

"The family of yonder grove will pass thereby to-morrow, about this time, but rather later, in the dusk of the evening."

"No," said Harry, "you are mistaken; they leave early, and will arrive at their journey's end before this hour to-morrow."

"Not so, Master Harry—they will be delayed."

"How know you this?"

"Enough," said the gipsy, "that I do know more than you; but if you doubt my words, watch and see. I don't mislead you. Be you near the shepherd's hut, but not in sight, this time to-morrow, well armed and mounted, with one or two others, and you may save her you love from a fate worse than death. And now, good night; be cautious, Master Harry, and quench not the light of your father's house by haste or rashness. Those you will meet are good horsemen and ready shots; but the hand of the guilty man always trembles. Once more, good night—be quick, but steady."

The gipsy was gone ere Harry recovered from the reverie into which her words had plunged him. For a moment, he stood pondering in his mind what this warning might mean.

"Stuff and nonsense, perhaps," thought Harry, "and yet I'll test the truth of one part of her story. Why should their journey be delayed? This, at least, I will ascertain, and if that is true, the rest may follow."

Without apprising his father of his intentions, Harry mounted his horse the following morning about eleven o'clock, taking his servant Ned with him, and his saddle bag, well provided with pistols, and rode over to Elm Grove.

To his surprise he found the family had not yet left, as George Selwyn had detained his father on business, and was still in the house.

"Ah!" thought Harry, "so far that gipsy tells true. I guess the plot now that's hatching, and will watch that fellow narrowly."

Giving directions to his servant to wait for him in a certain bye lane, a few miles further on his road, Harry put his horse in the stable, and walked round to the hall door. John Harding, the footman, answered the bell, all ready dressed for starting.

"Why, not gone yet, John?" exclaimed Harry.

"No, sir; Mr. George has detained master all the morning in the library, and now we don't go till after luncheon."

"Indeed! Then I suppose I may walk into the drawing-room for a minute?"

"Oh, yes, sir; our young lady is there," replied John, with a knowing smile.

"Oh, Mr. Howard!" exclaimed Mary, as he entered the room, "we scarcely expected to have seen you again; but George rode over here early this morning, and has detained papa on business. We don't leave now till three o'clock, and I am sure mamma will be glad if you will stay and lunch with us."

"That I am unable to do," replied Harry; "but will remain half-an-hour, if I am not encroaching on your time and preparations."

"Our packing is all completed," replied Mary, "and all we have now to do is to put on our bonnets, so you need not think your company an intrusion."

Harry sat down on the sofa, and for a few minutes remained lost in thought, and gave such unmeaning answers to a few questions asked by Miss Maitland, that she could not fail to notice his abstraction, and rallied him on his agreeable humour.

"Leave taking," said Harry, "is far from a cheerful office. Doubts will sometimes cross one's mind, when and how we may meet again—if ever. Forebodings of danger hang about me, which I cannot dispel."

"Do not anticipate evil, Mr. Howard; we ought ever to hope in a bright future, and a few weeks hence, I trust, we shall all meet again."

"May Heaven grant it!" replied Harry, as the door opened, and George Selwyn stood before him.

"What! *you* here, Mr. Howard?" exclaimed George, in surprise.

"And why not?" replied Harry, confronting him. "There is nothing very extraordinary, I suppose, in my riding over to take leave of my neighbours."

"Certainly not ; if you were to use the singular instead of the plural number—but your leave-taking call was made yesterday, if I mistake not."

"My visits do not require your sanction, sir," said Harry ; "and if ill-timed, your father can prevent their repetition."

"The object of them, sir, is sufficiently obvious to me, if not to others ; and as Miss Maitland's brother, I have a right to demand an explanation of your frequent visits here."

"Which," said Harry, "you will excuse me for saying, I do not consider myself under the least obligation to afford to YOU."

"Very well, sir," exclaimed Selwyn, in a towering passion ; "beware how you cross my path, or you may rue this insolence."

"And permit me, Mr. George Selwyn, to offer you a little piece of advice also ; beware how you threaten me again, or I will unmask your devices to your father. I know you well, better than you think."



"Do you indeed," said Selwyn, leaving the room with a sneer; "you are extremely clever, no doubt."

As the door closed upon him, Miss Maitland exclaimed,

"How rude and ill-tempered George is. I hope, Mr. Howard, you will not quarrel with him; for he is very revengeful sometimes, and quite frightens me."

"No," replied Harry, "I shall keep him at a respectful distance, unless he should try to injure you, as he did once before, and then he must take the consequences."

"Pray, Mr. Howard, do not ever again involve yourself in danger on my account."

"Not if it can be avoided, rest assured," replied Harry. "But hark! there goes Mr. George, full gallop up the avenue, and now I must also take my leave. The gipsy may be wrong after all."

"What do you mean about the gipsy?" she enquired.

"Oh, nothing particular," said Harry, rising

abruptly, and extending his hand. "May Heaven preserve you from all harm till we meet again."

Harry left the room, and in passing through the hall exchanged a few words with John Harding in a whisper, the only response to which was,

"Never fear, sir, I'll be provided."

The sun had long set below the horizon on this evening, and darkness was coming on, when a large double-bodied carriage, drawn by four horses, was leisurely ascending the last hill, on the open Chilmark Downs; the coachman and groom occupying the box seat, and the footman and lady's maid snugly ensconced in the rumble. Suddenly, four horsemen, emerging from behind the shepherd's hut, rushed across the turf and drew up in the road; the two foremost, with pistols in hand, placing themselves so as to prevent the carriage proceeding farther, and threatening the coachman with instant death if he attempted to move. The other two, whose faces were covered with black crape, dismounted at the carriage door, which was immediately

opened by a tall powerful-looking man, who seemed to be the leader. Mr. Selwyn, trembling and shaking in every limb, timorously offered his purse, and hoped they would allow them to proceed on their journey.

"Keep your money to yourself, old man," replied the leader; "we want no dross of that kind. But your fair daughter there, she must go with us."

"Oh, merciful God! what can you want with my dear child?" exclaimed Mrs. Selwyn.

"She shall come to no harm, madam, and will be restored to you again. Come," said the man, in a gruff voice, "no parleying. Go she must, and shall."

"Never!" cried Mrs. Selwyn, "as long as I have life and strength to protect her! Here, John!" she cried; "help! help! or we shall be murdered!"

John Hardman forced his way to the carriage door, when he was suddenly pushed back by the other man.

"Never mind, ma'am," he shouted out, "help

will soon be here ; they sha'n't have my young missus. Let go, you scoundrel, or I'll blow your brains out !" saying which, he placed a pistol at the leader's head, which was instantly knocked aside by his companion, who felled John Harding to the ground, and in the scuffle the pistol exploded, lodging its contents in the second robber's leg.

" Here, more help !" shouted the leader, as he vainly endeavoured to drag Miss Maitland from the carriage.

" Quick, Tom ! leave Mike to mind the horses !"

As the two were thus occupied in trying to possess themselves of the young lady (Mr. Selwyn being too frightened to resist), with the speed of lightning two horsemen hove in sight, and so sudden was their onslaught, that the man who kept guard over the coachman, having his attention directed to his companions at the carriage side, heard not their approach, and was instantly knocked senseless out of his saddle.

" Down on the rogue, Will !" cried Harry,

"and pinion him whilst we grapple with the others. Now, Ned, to the rescue!" saying which, he dashed at the nearest robber, who, turning at his voice, discharged his pistol straight at Harry's head, but missed his aim. A blow from Harry's heavy-headed iron hunting crop descended on the robber's arm, which fell powerless by his side. "Knock that fellow down, Ned," cried he, "whilst I secure the other.

"Stand back from me, or you are a dead man!" cried the leader, turning about and confronting Harry; "I will not be taken alive!"

"Yield!" cried Harry; "your men are prisoners, and so shall you be, base scoundrel and woman robber! I know you now—Dick Darrel!"

"Then you know too much—your fate be on your own head!" saying which, he pulled a pistol from his pocket, and fired, then jumping on his horse, rode rapidly away. The ball passed through Harry's hat, grazing his head, which stunned him for an instant, and he fell backwards into Ned's arms.

“Oh, my dear master’s killed!” cried Ned; “help, John Harding!” Quickly placing him on the ground, Ned felt for the wound, where the blood trickled down his master’s face, but none could he discover. “He ain’t killed yet—quick, John, and get your bottle out, he’ll soon come to again, he’s only fainting, but by Jingo! ’twas a near shave!”

John Harding, who liked a drop of something good, soon produced his flask of brandy and water, when pouring some down Harry’s throat, he soon began to revive, so did the other two robbers, one of whom springing to his legs, dealt Ned a thundering crack on the head with the butt end of his pistol, which laid him beside his master, but John Harding’s stout blackthorn stick fell in return on the robber’s sconce, leveling him also in the dust.

“Lie there, you scoundrel!” shouted John, now flourishing his cane about. “I’m master of the field; move another foot, and I’ll blow your brains out.”

He with the broken arm took the hint, and

the other heeded it not ; but Will's prisoner was becoming fractious, and he could not hold him.

"Here, then, Will," cried John, handing a cocked pistol, "put that ball into his carcase, if he moves hand or foot. They have nearly killed Master Harry between them, and we need not be very particular."

Harry Howard was by this time roused from his stupor, and sprang to his legs.

"Hurrah !" cried John, "the battle's won ! and now we'll bind our prisoners ; but keep a watch on that black rascal there, sir, while I wake up Ned, who's had a settler from him already."

During this short but sharp skirmish, Mr. Selwyn had closed the carriage door and drawn up the windows, and Miss Maitland, overcome with terror and the exertion, to free herself from the ruffian's grasp, lay back almost senseless in her mother's arms, until aroused by the report of the pistol and Ned's words, "My dear master is killed !" As these words fell on her ear, she again swooned, and sunk powerless on the seat,

where she lay, as if dead, for several minutes. On recovering consciousness, her first exclamation was, "Oh, mamma! they have killed him! my noble, generous preserver! Let me see him once more!" she cried frantically, "perhaps he is not dead; I may assist him yet; pray let me go!"

"Stay, my dear child," said Mrs. Selwyn, "you can do no good; your father will get out."

At this moment Harry approached the carriage door.

"Now, Mr. Selwyn, let down the window," cried he; "the rogues are vanquished."

"Oh, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Miss Maitland, "that is Mr. Howard's voice! pray let down the window; thank God he is preserved!"

It were useless to attempt depicting the joy of Mrs. Selwyn and her daughter at this unexpected deliverance, and their tears fell apace when thanking their brave defender, whose life had been so nearly sacrificed in their preservation from outrage.



for ten, in a pig's whisper ; and Bob (turning to the ostler), stalls for seven horses—that's all ; let go their heads, for I'm all behind time ;" and away rattled Jack.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE sensations of Miss Maitland and Harry Howard, when seated by each other's side, may be easier imagined than described. In effect, they were too overwhelming for utterance, and their hands remained locked in each other for several moments, the pressure returned from each telling more than language could express. But Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn were earnest and eager in their inquiries about the perpetrators of this daring outrage: and although Harry's suspicions were confirmed by Dick Darrell's appearance as leader in the fray, he thought it at present more prudent to conceal them from Mr.

Selwyn ; he therefore evaded giving any decided opinion, saying the fullest investigation should be made the next day into the matter.

“But how extraordinary that you happened to be here, Mr. Howard,” said Mr. Selwyn ; to which he replied—

“I and my servant were on our road this morning, when I called at Elm Grove, to see a friend on the Downs, living within a mile of the spot on which you were stopped, and on our return we were fortunate enough to arrive just in time to save you from further violence.”

As they were approaching the old town of Marlborough, and just passing the first lamp, Mrs. Selwyn, who was seated opposite Harry, suddenly exclaimed, — “Good gracious ! Mr. Howard, your face is covered with blood and soot. I fear you are seriously injured.”

“Oh no,” replied Harry, “only a scratch I got from that villain’s pistol, which was discharged so near, that the powder has blackened my face ; but we shall all be the better

for a little soap and water presently," he added, in a gay tone. "There are no lives lost, thank God! but John and Ned have come in for their share of knocks and bruises, as well as myself."

As the carriage stopped at the hotel, the steps were instantly let down, and Harry springing out, nearly upset the old waiter, who was obsequiously bowing at the door.

"Lauks! Master Harry," he exclaimed, "what a figure you be looking, as if you'd been up the chimney."

"Never mind a little soot, John; we're all right except a scratch or two, and that's more than I calculated on an hour ago."

Having assisted the ladies from the carriage, attention was directed to his prisoner, who being conducted into a room by John Harding, he thus addressed:—

"Your master has escaped; but I know him well. Make a clean breast of all, or your doom is sealed. By a full confession to me, within an hour, your life shall be spared; but on no

other condition.—Now, take him away, John, and guard him well.”

At the appointed time the man was brought before Mr. Selwyn and Harry, who took down his confession in writing. It amounted to this, that he was employed by Dick Darrell, with others, to assist in carrying off the young lady.

“Where was she to be carried to?” asked Harry.

“Penton Park, sir.

“Who was with your master this evening, before you set out on this business?”

The man hesitated.

“Speak, you scoundrel!” said Harry, “or I’ll hang you—the names instantly.”

“Mr. George Selwyn and Macneil.”

“Just as I thought—the gipsy’s right,” said Harry, jumping up, and pacing the room in great agitation.

Mr. Selwyn looked aghast. “Do you mean to say my son was at Penton Park this evening?” nervously enquired he.

"Yes, sir," replied the man, "he was—I know him well, he's been often there."

"And do you believe he helped to plan this outrage on my daughter-in-law?"

The man was silent.

"Answer the question," said Harry.

"Yes sir, I do."

"Sign your name, Mike Meadows, at the bottom of this paper," said Harry. "I know you better than you thought, and lucky for you you speak the truth."

The man obeyed, with a searching look at Harry.

"Now, John Harding, take him away, and give him some supper."

"Don't put me in prison, sir," cried Mike, imploringly. "I've got a wife and young family, and never will I serve such a master again. Only pass it over this time, Master Harry, and I'll serve you to my dying day—I won't try to escape, sir, indeed I won't, and I'll tell more of their goings on at that bad place."

"Enough, Mike, your life is in my hands—

knowing this, you may be trusted. Now, mark me well, I take you at your word—you are free—obey my orders, and you are henceforth my servant. Go and dress your horse; he is mine now, and you will receive my further orders to-morrow.”

The man fell on his knees, bursting into tears, and cried—

“Oh, Master Harry, you have saved my poor wife and children from the workhouse.”

“There, Mike, that will do, now leave us.”

As the door closed, Mr. Selwyn exclaimed—

“Can this be all true, Mr. Howard? Can my son George be engaged in such a monstrous and barbarous act as this?”

“Too true, I fear, sir,” replied Harry; “and for your sake, we must make as light of this business as we can. I dreaded it would turn out thus, knowing how intimate George is with that lawless fellow Dick Darrell, and Macneil.”

On the following morning the constable rushed down to the Castle in a great fright, saying that the lock-up had been broken open

during the night, and the prisoners had made their escape.

“Well,” said Harry, “it does not signify so much now, as I have one here, who has turned king’s evidence, and I know their leader.”

After breakfast, whilst Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn were closetted in their room, talking over the affair of the previous night, Miss Maitland and Harry were enjoying a most agreeable promenade in the gardens and grounds of the old Castle Hotel, and having climbed to the top of the large mound, were now engaged in earnest conversation; Harry related his interview with the gipsy, who had been the means of enabling him to defeat the machinations of George Selwyn and Macneil.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “I have always dreaded their revenge since that affair with Macneil; but I never could have believed them so heartless and cruel. But for you, my generous deliverer, I should now be in the power of those wretches.”

“And yet it is not long ago,” said he, “that



you doubted Harry Howard's friendship, and his watchful care over you—you will believe him now, I hope."

"Yes, yes!" she exclaimed; "you are indeed my guardian angel, and I am most grateful for your protection."

"Gratitude is not the only sentiment Harry would wish you to express and feel towards him," taking her hand in his; "but more I will not ask now, until you find me deserving your implicit confidence."

"That," she replied blushing, and casting her eyes on the ground, "you have deserved and obtained already."

"Then can I desire no greater earthly blessing," said Harry; "every wish of my heart is now fully gratified."

The voice of John Harding at this moment was heard shouting his name in the garden, and further explanations broken off, as they hastened down the hill to meet him.

"Master has ordered the carriage round, Miss, in half an hour," said John, "and

can't think what's become of you and Mr. Howard."

Harry, on re-entering the hotel, explained to Mrs. Selwyn that they had taken a walk to the top of the mound to see the view, which seemed satisfactory ; and turning to Mr. Selwyn, inquired his wishes as to the perpetrators of this outrage, observing—

"The leader, believing he killed me last night, has of course already fled the country, and the crime itself, without any death, is sufficient to transport him, and most of those concerned."

"Well, well," said Mr. Selwyn, "we will talk it over again to-night, with Mary, and write you fully to-morrow on the subject."

"Then I must wish you good bye, for the present," said Harry, "as I must return home ;" and shaking hands with both, hoped no further interruption would delay their journey. Harry left the room, but lingered in the hall, until he saw Miss Maitland descending the staircase.

A few brief words were exchanged between

them, with a long pressure of the hand, when Harry tore himself away, and rushed across the yard to the stables. In an hour from this time, he was again cantering over the Chilmark Downs on his homeward track, with Ned, and his late prisoner Mike, at a respectful distance behind, laughing and joking at their last night's adventure.

We will now, with Mike's assistance, unravel the mystery of the plot, in which his master had taken so conspicuous a part.

Dick Darrell was the eldest son of old Squire Darrell, of Penton Park—of good and ancient lineage; but Dick's father, by marrying his cook, had cut himself off from all polite society, and addicted himself so much to the bottle, that his earthly career terminated soon after the coming of age of his hopeful heir. Dick, on succeeding to the family estate, lashed out in every direction like a vicious horse, and having from boyhood been chiefly associated with grooms and keepers, his ideas of gentlemanly or moral conduct were of a very lax order.

“Birds of a feather flock together;” and from meeting George Selwyn and Macneil in the hunting field, the two soon became fast friends, Selwyn and Macneil often spending weeks together at Penton Park. Dick’s lawless acts had already obtained an unenviable notoriety, but from the old house being surrounded by a deep moat, with a draw-bridge at one side only, neither constable nor sheriff’s officers could effect an entrance; the interior being also guarded by large and savage dogs. Two younger brothers also resided under the same roof, whose chief pride consisted in being at the head of a desperate band of poachers, who, from their numbers and daring acts, were the terror of the neighbourhood. Thus much, as a short account of Dick’s parentage and characteristics.

About a week previous to the attempted abduction of Miss Maitland, Dick, Macneil, and George Selwyn were engaged in their usual deep potations after dinner, when the former, turning to Macneil, said—

"Well, Tom, have you got over that love fit of yours, with George's sister-in-law?"

"Oh yes, confound the girl! she served me a pretty trick, and I should like to pay her off for it."

"Then, why don't you, Tom?—I'll lend a hand, if you are in earnest."

"But how, Dick? I don't see my way at all."

"Then, I do—so here goes. I'll carry her off, and bring her to this old fortress of mine, and here you shall keep her till you get her to marry you, and secure her fortune—for devil a soul could find her out here, or get her away either."

"Hang it!" cried George; "a capital plan, I'll swear; she'll soon knock under in this old place, with bats and owls to talk to only, and be glad to marry Tom; and I'll engage to get over my old father. Well, Tom, what do you say?" asked Dick. "I will perform Bluebeard—you the Knight, to discover the damsel, and effect her release on promise of marriage."

"A capital trick—hah ! hah ! pass the bottle, George. Here's success to the plan."

"It's all very fine," said Macneil, "but I don't put my neck into a hempen collar for any girl."

"Ho ! ho !" shouted Dick Darrell, "that's a good 'un ! how can your precious neck be endangered ? you don't appear at all. I run the risk ; but come, it's a deuced good lark, any way, and I'll have the girl myself, so that's soon settled. You'll help me, George, won't you ?"

"Yes, Dick, with all my heart."

"I won't agree to that, though," said Macneil ; "my claim comes first."

"Then you will agree to this, perhaps : pay me down five hundred pounds if you marry her, and I'll run the gauntlet."

"Agreed," said Macneil ; "that I'll stand to."

"Very well, then it's a bargain : now give your hand, and pass the bottle. You shall stay here *incog.*, and see all fair when I bring her back. George and I will arrange the rest."

It was then decided that George Selwyn

should watch the movements of the family, and give timely notice of their journeyings.

"Well," said George, "that's all right now; I shall have my revenge, and you, too, Tom, on that fellow, Harry Howard. We can make sure of Miss Mary and her money, and the old man will come down handsomely, too, I warrant, to hush up the business. That wild chap, Brown, played the same trick with Miss P——, across yonder, and the old governor was glad enough to pay him a good sum down to take the damaged goods off his hands—ha! ha!"

The day following the concoction of this nefarious plot, George Selwyn returned home with Macneil to make the necessary inquiries; and it so happened, while these two worthies were discussing their plans in an arbour in the garden, bordering on an old green lane, the gipsy was passing by at the time, and overhearing the name of Harry Howard, crouched behind the bank, and thus becoming cognizant of their intentions, she loitered in the neighbourhood of Elm Grove, to warn Harry of his danger.

George Selwyn having obtained the desired information when his father would leave Elm Grove, wrote Dick Darrell all particulars, and as we have seen, under the pretence of business, delayed Mr. Selwyn's departure until the dusk of evening should favour their designs; but both he and Macneil being of too cautious a nature to compromise themselves more than was absolutely necessary, and it being agreed that their plans could be more plausibly worked out by their absence from the scene of action, the execution of this daring deed devolved solely on Darrell, Selwyn and Macneil lying *perdue* in Penton Park, until his return.

The two conspirators were waiting in nervous apprehension in a back room, overlooking the entrance to the Park, with the window partly opened, when the furious galloping of a horse struck upon their ear, and in a few seconds Dick Darrell stood before them, pale and trembling from excitement.

"D——!" said he, with an oath, "the bird



has escaped, my rascals are taken prisoners, and I have killed Harry Howard."

"The devil you have!" exclaimed George Selwyn; "then you have made a pretty hash of it, indeed!"

All was then told, and Dick Darrell, dreading the consequences, swallowed down a goblet of wine, and having packed up a few things in his valise, jumped on a fresh horse, and rode off for London, *en route* for the continent, George Selwyn giving him an introduction to a friend in Hamburg, where he was to await further intelligence.

Dick Darrell had no sooner left his paternal roof, than Selwyn and Macneil followed his example, and rode home as fast as possible to show themselves in the neighbourhood early the next morning, George having previously told his wife that he was going to dine with a friend quite in the contrary direction to Penton Park, and should not return till late at night, or perhaps the next day.

On the second morning a loving epistle was

received by George from his father, thanking him for his friend's polite attention to him on the Monday night, and hinting that as the servant who had been made prisoner had confessed his son's participation, with his master, Darrell, in the plot to carry off Miss Maitland, he should recommend him to make a rather prolonged tour on the continent with his family. This hint was most dutifully and unhesitatingly acted upon ; and George, accompanied by his friend Macneil, fled precipitately, leaving his wife and children to follow, alleging that particular business required his immediate presence in Holland ; and Mrs. George Selwyn being a native of that country, no great inducement was requisite to hasten their departure from England.

Dick Darrell did not think it safe to shew his face again at Penton Park until a twelve-month after his daring exploit, when he was assured no further steps would be taken by Mr. Selwyn, who, to screen his son, let the matter drop, on the condition that George should henceforth reside permanently abroad.

Darrell felt relieved from a load of apprehension, when, joined by his friends in Holland, he was assured of Harry Howard's existence.

"Confound the fellow!" he exclaimed, "he is a brave lad, and right glad am I his blood does not rest on my head; but being pressed so hardly, I was obliged to fire, or he would have knocked me over. Barring his interference, however, it would have been a glorious spree, and old Selwyn must have knocked under; as it is, there is no harm done, and I shall be off home again."

"Better wait a little, Dick," said George, "until the old man has cooled down."

"Not I, George; we have him safe enough, since he believes his hopeful son and heir is one of the party. Honour and respectability of family, and that sort of thing, shuts his mouth at once. By Gad! how his teeth chattered that night, when I held the pistol to his head! Why, the women showed ten times more pluck!"

On Harry's return to Beechwood, the news

of his adventure spread far and wide, and his marriage with Miss Maitland was fully settled by the gossips, who decided it was impossible he could now sue in vain.

## CHAPTER XV.

It was now the middle of May. The pleasure-seekers had dispersed in various directions ; some to town, some to the sea-side, others to their country seats, or to the continent. But another set of visitors were attracted to the City of Waters, to recruit their enfeebled constitutions, by large draughts from its far-famed salubrious springs. Of this class was an old and much-esteemed friend of Harry's father, who generally paid an annual visit, accompanied by his wife and two daughters. Colonel Stewart was a gentleman of large fortune, high family connections, and always moving in the first

circles, as well as a member of parliament, having represented for many years one of his county boroughs without opposition. The meeting of the two old friends was always looked forward to with equal pleasure by both, and Harry was detained at home by his father [at these re-unions, to attend the ladies in their riding excursions about the country. The eldest, now about thirty, without any great pretensions to beauty, was of a most amiable and engaging disposition, and devotedly attached to her father, on whose account she had refused several eligible offers of marriage. In fact, her resolution had been taken, and firmly adhered to, of never quitting her paternal roof as long as her father lived. Charlotte, the youngest sister, and some years her junior, was very fascinating in her manners, of finely-formed and delicate features, sweet and cheerful disposition, and deservedly admired in the highest circles. In their daily rides Harry was her usual companion, and his attentions to his daughter were observed by Colonel Stewart with much satisfaction, as he en-

tertained a very high opinion of Harry from his respectful behaviour to himself, as well as the total absence of all affectation or dandyism in his manners.

From the long and steadfast friendship which had existed for so many years between the two fathers, an alliance between their children was not only approved of, but desired ; and Harry's attentions became the subject of conversation most agreeable to both.—In whatever direction our hopes and wishes may turn, there are seldom wanting some circumstances to confirm us in the idea that they will be realized, and so it was in this case ; the two old friends congratulated themselves that Harry's behaviour to Charlotte proceeded from a stronger impulse than mere politeness, and that his heart was most decidedly engaged—and so it was—they had only mistaken the person.

Parents, and the world at large, are too much taken by appearances. It is nothing extraordinary that young people of similar tastes and dispositions, when thrown much together, should

manifest great pleasure in each other's society, which is too often construed into a different and warmer feeling, and on this rock also many a young and artless girl has split, by a man's attentions being taken as a sure proof of his affections.

Harry was no flirt ; his behaviour to Charlotte was dictated by a great regard for her father, as well as by the pleasure he felt in her society. There was no love in the case, and his respectful and almost distant manner sometimes, he thought, would be sufficient to satisfy the young lady that he never contemplated anything beyond common attention.

About a month had passed in this manner, diversified with dinner-parties, a pic-nic or two, and the usual summer amusements, when the Bath races commenced. A large riding party was formed for this occasion, including Harry and Robert Howard. They were leisurely ascending the hill leading to the race-course, when the carriage of Mr. Selwyn, with Miss Maitland and other ladies inside, passed. Not knowing



of their return, Harry was so taken by surprise, that he had only time to take off his hat in token of recognition, as they passed him; but Colonel Stewart was sufficiently near, riding by his side, to remark the colour which suffused Harry's face and brow.

"That's a smart equipage, Harry, and some gay young ladies inside. They are friends of yours, I perceive."

"Yes, sir—our neighbours. I did not know they had returned from London."

"A pretty girl you bowed to, Master Harry," (with a searching glance).

"Some think so, sir," was the reply.

Colonel Stewart somehow fancied Harry thought so too, but no further remark was made.

Harry, as soon as practicable, made his escape from his party, and of course offered his sincere congratulations to Miss Maitland on her safe return, of which he said until that day he had not been apprised. A seat was offered him in the carriage, with champagne and refreshments

usual on such occasions. Harry, giving his horse to the servant, did not require a second invitation, but jumped up at once on the box, delighted at this unexpected meeting. He was occupied in an agreeable *tête-à-tête*, how long we will not say, when observing Colonel Stewart passing by, with a particular look at his fair companion, Harry abruptly said,—

“ Oh, there is my party, whom I promised to escort to and from the races. I must be off, so good-bye for the present. I shall soon see you again.”

“ But who are your friends ?” she enquired.

“ Colonel Stewart, my father’s oldest college chum, and his two daughters.”

“ Of course,” she added, rather piqued, “ I cannot expect to detain you from them.”

Harry did not quite like the remark—but offering his hand, left the carriage. When he was gone, Miss Dundonald said—

“ I suppose those Stewarts are rather grand people, as they have two servants behind them with cockades.”

"Yes, I believe so," replied Mary. "I have heard they are very old friends of the Howards, and very rich."

"That was a nice-looking girl Harry was riding with," replied Miss Dundonald.

"Oh yes," added Miss Maitland with a sigh, "and he appeared very attentive."

"Not very, my dear. I did not observe that."

A few days after this occurrence, the Colonel resolved to ascertain his young friend's feelings towards his daughter; and when they were together, broached the subject, by saying—

"Harry, do your thoughts ever run on matrimony?"

"Why, sir, they may sometimes; but my marrying for some years, is out of the question. My father would not hear of it."

"I am not quite of your opinion, for I believe he would," replied the Colonel, "provided the lady was an eligible one. I know one he would at once accept as a daughter."

"Indeed!" said Harry; "and pray may I ask who that is?"

Without further circumlocution, the Colonel then cautiously and delicately explained his own and Mr. Howard's wishes with regard to his daughter, saying, "that he admired his manly character so much, that he should be proud to call him his son-in-law."

Harry was so much taken by surprise at this unexpected proposition, that he was unable at first to answer. He was certainly in no very enviable state of mind, under so many conflicting feelings, —duty to his father—respect for the Colonel—delicacy towards his daughter—love for another. It was not from hesitation how to act, but from dread of inflicting pain on those he so highly regarded, which kept him silent.

"Well, Harry," said the Colonel, "what am I to augur from your silence?"

"That I feel more deeply than I can find words to express the undeserved preference you have so kindly shown to me, and the honour you have done me; but, although I entertain the highest

esteem for your fair and amiable daughter, I would not outrage any woman's feelings by offering my hand without my whole heart ; and that I cannot affirm to be at my own disposal."

"Then I conclude you are engaged to another?"

"No, sir, I am not—but, with equal candour, I will admit that my affections are, although no avowal has been made of them."

"Well, Harry, I am sorry to find this is so—but perhaps it is not a very serious case, at least I hope not—boy's love only, very likely ;—but seriously speaking, for I am in earnest, if you will propose for Charlotte within six months, you shall receive with her on your marriage-day thirty thousand pounds, and that is ten thousand more than I should give with her to any other man."

"Your extreme kindness and generosity," replied Harry, deeply and painfully affected, "quite overpower me."

"Never mind, my boy, take time to consider, and I hope second thoughts may prove the best."

Thus ended the conversation.

The sportsman's season was now approaching, and a college acquaintance of Harry's, nearly connected with Mr. Selwyn's family, became a visitor at Elm Grove. Mr. Roberts was of good family, quiet and unassuming manners, and of cheerful disposition, but with rather romantic ideas. He wished also to be considered a good sportsman, which, unfortunately for Harry, he was not.

The two friends soon renewed their acquaintance, and Roberts could not conceal his admiration for his host's daughter.

"Oh!" he said, "she is the most delightful, charming girl I have ever met, and Scotch also—you know my enthusiasm about Scotland."

"Quite well, Roberts, and the song you were always attempting to sing at Oxford, but never could accomplish, 'Scots, wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled.'"

"Ah! I did break down occasionally in the second verse; but really, Harry, this girl has taken entire possession of my heart, I can think

of nothing else.—Marry her, I must, and shall propose at once.”

“And be rejected.”

“Why so?”

“Women are not to be taken by storm in this manner. You have only known her a fortnight, and besides, she has several admirers already.—Don’t make a fool of yourself; that’s my advice to an old friend.”

The first of September arrived, when Harry had invited Roberts to shoot *with*, but not *at* him, which unluckily he did, and hit him also pretty smartly.

Harry did not at all admire Robert’s turn-out upon this occasion; everything was new, down to his shoes and gaiters. He had also a new double-barrelled gun from Manton, with hair triggers, which he handled in anything but an artistic manner. This did not escape Harry’s or the keeper’s notice, who advised his young master to keep him out of distance when they reached the field.

This precaution was adopted by Harry for

some time ; but as they were crossing a very small enclosure, a covey of partridges suddenly rose, whirling in Harry's direction. Roberts instantly fired, with both eyes shut as he pulled the trigger—the birds pursued their flight unharmed. But where was Harry Howard ? Senseless, in the keeper's arms ! This man, with a foreboding of evil, had doggedly persisted in keeping close to his young master during this day's shooting, and was just in time to prevent his falling to the ground—kneeling down, he was supporting his master's bleeding head on his lap, when this scene was presented to the view of Mr. Roberts, who, turning round to an attendant, quickly asked what had happened.

“ Enough for once, sir,” said the man, in a sulky voice. “ You've shot young master—that's all. Why do you stand gaping there like an oaf ?” said the man ; “ come and help me, can't ye ?”

In a moment he was kneeling by his side, in all the agony of despair, wringing his hands and sobbing convulsively.



“That’s enough,” said the keeper; “hand out your flask of brandy-and-water, and be off for a doctor—that’s summut for you to do—mischief enough you’ve done already, and I always thought you would. Why, the man’s in a maze. Here, John, give us the flask out of his pocket, and be off with the pony for the doctor.”

By the application of the stimulant, Harry began to awake from his stupor, and tried to rouse himself up.

“Stop a bit, my dear young master, have another pull at the flask——”

“Why, what’s the matter!” enquired Harry.

“Ah! it’s all right now, but by jingo, I thought as how that fool had adone for ye. There’s a hole through your hat as big as your fist, and lucky the head wasn’t there; but he’s peppered you about the face and forehead pretty smartly.”

The fact was, that at about thirty yards’ distance, the body of the charge had passed through

the upper part of Harry's hat; several of the stray shots, however, penetrated deep into his forehead and face, and but for his standing in an oblique direction, some of these would have entered the brain. Although not seriously hurt, Harry felt stupified and confused, and a carriage being obtained, he was conveyed home, and obliged to remain quiet for some days; but the shots were too deeply imbedded in the bone to be extracted.

Roberts returned to Elm Grove in a melancholy state of mind, and with shame and sorrow made a full confession of this unfortunate finale to his first day's partridge shooting. Miss Maitland was so much agitated, that to conceal her emotions she sought her own room, being assured by Roberts that Harry was in no danger. There was a dinner-party that evening, to which Harry had been invited, and having promised Mrs. Selwyn some partridges for the occasion, the keeper was sent over with the birds, and his compliments.

“Really,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “this is very

kind and considerate of Mr. Howard, when he must be suffering so much pain."

Miss Maitland, on reaching her room, sunk into a chair, her heart beating almost to suffocation, with contending emotions. She thought of Harry's narrow escape from a sudden and violent death with horror, but thankfulness for his preservation predominated, and sinking down on her knees, she returned thanks to Heaven, that his life had been spared, and this bitter trial of an earthly separation removed. When nearly losing those dear to us, we then experience the depth of our affection; and for the first time she now felt how dearly she loved, and loved only, Harry Howard. His early friendship, his constant and ever-watchful solicitude about her, all rushed at once upon her mind, and "yet, perhaps," she murmured to herself, "he may regard me only as a sister." Even so, she felt content—she could never marry another. The advice of her cousin had never been forgotten—*"Never give your heart without your judgment, and never give your hand without your heart."*

To that dear cousin she had been also indebted for that firmness of principle and complacency of character so unusual in girls of her age. One lesson, which had been constantly impressed upon her young mind, was still retained and acted upon—"Self-examination of her daily conduct before retiring to rest."

The education of girls in the present day is almost entirely superficial. They are taught to dance, play, and sing, to read and speak fluently, French, Italian, and German. All these accomplishments tend to one object chiefly, the outward adorning of the person ; but where is the inward adorning of the mind?—that is scarcely ever duly considered, as the most important of all, and it becomes in consequence a complete chaos ;—the surface of the statue is finely polished, beautiful to the eye, perhaps elegant, fascinating ; but what is the interior?—the cas-ket only, without the jewel.

I would not be thought unjustly censorious—but what is the reality—what does every-day experience teach us of women?—With all the

personal attractions to engage, many, alas too many, possess not the hearts or minds to retain the affections of a sensible man. They are early taught to consider a good marriage or establishment as the great desideratum—the only object they should look to in life. Money—money, (that curse and bane of humanity, as well as (if rightly used) one of its greatest blessings,) enters alone into their calculations, as if that alone were the antidote to every evil, the universal salve for every malady that flesh is heir to.

What wonder then, to hear of so many unhappy, and ill-assorted marriages. Coupled, but not matched—the fettered pair, mutually deceiving or deceived, spend a dissatisfied and wretched existence—a bargain has been made, of which one at least is sure to repent, when repentance is unavailing! But enough of this at present;—these pages will unfold, not imaginary but real tales of some such compacts.

To return to Mary Maitland—what thought she of that solemn obligation? Why had she

refused the tempting proposals—the flattering attentions—the handsome persons, and large endowments offered her by so many? Simply because she could not love one of them, as she felt she ought to love her husband—with intensity, with devotion, with one solely absorbed and wholly engrossing attachment.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ROBERTS continued to pay an almost daily visit to Harry until he was sufficiently recovered to leave the house ; but his head and eyesight had been so much affected, that for some months he was unable to face the glare of day, without a shade over his eyes. The pleasure with which Miss Maitland received Roberts upon his return after visiting Harry, was construed by that enthusiastic young gentleman into a warm feeling towards himself, and led him into the absurd position (when they were sitting in the drawing-room together) of throwing himself at her feet with the most impassioned avowal of his love. There are few things more painful to a right-

mind woman than such declarations, to which she can make no return, especially when proceeding from one she otherwise respects as a friend. Recovering from her surprise, she requested Mr. Roberts to rise at once, or she must leave the room ; for, being a great favourite with her father-in-law, she wished to avoid wounding his feelings as much as possible ; but her quiet, though decided tone of voice when refusing to hear more on such a subject, soon convinced Roberts of the hopelessness of pressing his suit any further.

“ We shall, I hope,” she said, “ meet as usual, and as a friend I shall be always happy to regard you ; but I trust your good sense will spare me the repetition of a scene like this.”

Poor Roberts, who possessed a kind and very sensitive heart, burst into tears, and rushed from the room, and on the following day quitted Elm Grove for ever.

Harry’s reception on his first visit was such as to repay him for all the pain he had endured during the last fortnight. Miss Maitland was



sitting in the drawing-room, working with Miss Dundonald, as he rode past the window, when the sudden exclamation from her friend's lips—"There is Mr. Howard!" caused such a revulsion in her feelings, that she nearly fainted.

"Oh, my dear Mary!" exclaimed Lucy; "pray compose yourself, or you can go to your room whilst I receive him."

"No, no. I am very well again now; it is very foolish, but you know, Lucy, that affair of Mr. Roberts, which papa rather approved of, has quite unnerved me."

"Sit down, my love, whilst I get my vinaigrette; I will return in a moment."

"Oh, Lucy, don't leave me;" but her friend had vanished, and she was following her, when Harry entered the hall.

"Oh, Miss Maitland, are you also going to run away from me, because I am such a fright, as my friends tell me?"

She turned immediately, with eyes sparkling through her tears—silently held out her hand, but with such a look of kind, compassionate

tenderness, that Harry could only press her hand within his.

Harry's providential escape formed, of course, the first topic of conversation, and an anxious look was directed to his face, which observing, he said—

“There is no fear of *my* beauty being spoilt by these few scars. My cousin Robert might have dreaded their effect, for with him it would have been a serious thing, to be marked as with the small-pox. Our keeper says, I only look as if I had been kicked in the face by his nailed shoes.”

“But you must have suffered great pain at first?”

“The sensation, I must confess,” replied Harry, “was far from agreeable; and if you can fancy red hot pins being thrust into your arm, that is precisely what I experienced from the effects of the shots. But, come, let us change the subject and the scene by taking a stroll through the shubbery.”

As Miss Maitland left the room to prepare

for their ramble, Robert Howard was announced. On entering, he was rather vexed to find Harry seated there, but quickly recovering himself, exclaimed—

“Ah, Harry, I’m glad to find you are in the land of the living still, although that cockney nearly settled your business. If he had peppered me about the face as he did you, I would have given him a sample of the same sort in return.”

“That is, supposing you had been able to do so,” said Harry.

“Well, but this little affair will make you rather more interesting to the ladies, I suppose. A fellow with a scratched finger, or better still, with his arm in a sling and a pale face, beats all the handsome men off the ground.—‘Poor fellow! how he must suffer—how wretchedly he looks! how interesting! how romantic!’ and all such nonsense—Pshaw! how silly girls are! made up of sentimentality and affectation.”

“Really, Master Bob, your ideas of women are most flattering to the sex. How can such

a grand, noble-minded creature as yourself, condescend to pay them so much attention as you always do?"

"Oh!" replied Robert, "just to pass the time. Men of sense regard them in their proper light, as pretty dolls to while away an idle hour; but, like dolls in children's hands, when the paint wears off, they are thrown aside for new and prettier toys."

"Are you serious, Robert, in what you say?"

"Aye, that am I."

"Then I sincerely pity you, and conclude you never intend to marry."

"Yes I do, when I can find one to suit me. She must be good looking, as I should not like to have a fright sitting at the head of my table. She must be chatty and agreeable, to entertain my friends, and above all, have plenty of money. As for the rest, she can go her way for amusement and pleasure, as I shall certainly go mine—no billing and cooing for me."

"A happy woman will be Mrs. Robert Howard," said Harry, as he rose on the en-

trance of the ladies, who just then appeared prepared for a walk.

“Ah, Miss Maitland, how delighted I am to see you!” exclaimed Robert, springing forward; “really you are quite bewitching in that pretty bonnet—ready for a walk, I see. Pray allow me the honour of escorting you.”

“Oh, certainly, if you wish it,” she replied, rather gravely.

Robert was ready in a moment to offer his arm on leaving the house, which was politely declined, much to his annoyance. He persisted, however, in keeping by her side for some time, until Harry called her attention to a pretty shrub he wished to know the name of, and taking her aside, whispered—

“Will you allow me a privilege you have refused my cousin?”

“What is that?” she inquired.

“Your arm, as I feel rather giddy sometimes, and require a little steadying,” said Harry; “but if you think he will be offended, I can walk alone.”

“ Oh, I do not regard him ; for, to tell you the truth, I am rather tired of his fine speeches. He must look upon women as very silly, to think they can be always pleased with such nonsense.”

“ So he does, I can assure you, in truth ;” and Harry gave her a short account of his conversation in the drawing-room, as Mr. Robert walked on with an offended and proud air by the side of Miss Dundonald. After a most agreeable promenade through the walks and grounds, the party returned to the house nearly as they had left ; that is, Harry had made no proposal—neither, in truth, did Miss Maitland expect it. She felt every day more assured of his increasing regard for her, and with that conviction she was quite satisfied and happy. Harry, moreover, with his usual diffidence, dreaded a refusal so much, that he could not muster courage to speak on so serious a subject, until fully satisfied in his own mind that he should not share the fate of others, and be rejected. It must be confessed, also, he was rather parti-

cular and romantic in his ideas about women ; he would never marry any one whose affections had been previously given to another. He must possess her first and undivided love. This would be rather a difficult point to ascertain. Then she must love him for himself alone, without any mercenary or worldly considerations. Her love also for him must be pure as that of an angel. These several points were very difficult of solution, and required time and much observation to be thoroughly ascertained.

With such ideas, it would be no matter of surprise that Harry hesitated to lay open the real state of his heart in his addresses to Miss Maitland. Though believing her to be all he wished, yet doubts would sometimes arise, and his resolution was taken to see her pass through another Bath season, thus affording her an opportunity of being again admired and courted, which would prove if her heart still beat true to him. He had spoken plainly enough by looks, if not by words, of his real feelings towards her.

All he required now was, confirmation that she

preferred him to all and every other. She must be wholly his, or not his at all. The course he pursued might, and probably would have, ended in the loss of one less truly attached to him than Mary Maitland. She was tried, but never found wanting, in her unalterable regard for him. But Harry was tried also. His all was cast upon this die—he never could love another; and although happiness or misery for life must be the result of this trial, still he thought it must be made some time or other, and better then than later. Had Harry known the hazardous game he was playing, or seen the rock towards which he was drifting, on which the happiness of himself and one dearer than his own life had been so nearly wrecked, he had never risked so dangerous an experiment. Women do, and will, endure almost the loss of everything for the man they love—friends, fortune, and even life itself are not uncommon sacrifices—but they cannot endure neglect. Many a warm and true-hearted girl, when slighted by the man to whom her first affections had been



given, has, in a moment of pique and wounded feelings, accepted another, and rendered herself, if not him also, miserable for life. There is a very erroneous opinion that love will spring up after marriage, where it never existed before. Resignation may—that is the proper name to call it by.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE hunting season had now arrived, and as the days shortened, Harry's visits to Elm Grove began to shorten too; although he called and dined there occasionally, and in his manner was kind and warm-hearted as ever, yet the devotion of an ardent lover was to all outward appearance wanting. The flame, however, kept steadily burning. But Harry exercised great restraint over his feelings, and their true nature was seldom elicited except on emergencies. One soon occurred. Mr. Selwyn had been seized with a sudden attack of illness, which almost baffled the skill of his own medical attendant.

This news reaching Harry's ears, he was soon in the saddle and full gallop to Elm Grove. On being admitted, he found Miss Maitland alone and in tears. His worst fears were confirmed—Mr. Selwyn was dangerously ill. Time was precious.

"Come," said Harry, "don't give way yet; I know a very clever physician—go and ask your mother at once if she will see him?"

She returned with a message that her mother would be most happy if he would come; a servant could be sent off directly, if Harry would be kind enough to write a line to the doctor.

"No," said Harry, jumping up from his chair, "servants and notes won't do in such a case as this—I shall go myself."

"Not in all this heavy rain, I hope, Mr. Howard."

"Time and tide, my dear Miss Maitland, wait for no man; a wet jacket is no novelty to a fox-hunter. Good-bye, and keep up your spirits. I shall return as quickly as possible, and I hope with the doctor."

Harry sped away as riding for life or death. Luckily, it was about the doctor's dinner-hour, and he was at home. Harry would not put up his horse, which he gave to a lad to hold at the door whilst he went in to see the physician, and in a few words told his errand.

"Pray, my young friend, sit down," said Doctor Salter.

"Not now, sir; dawdling won't do."

"My dinner is just ready; it won't take me more than ten minutes to discuss that roast fowl," which just then made its appearance on the table.

"That will keep, sir. Here, John," addressing the servant, "take it away, and bring your master's great-coat instead, and tell Robert to be round with the carriage in a second."

"Really, Master Harry," said the good-natured doctor, "you are making yourself at home; I should think there must be a young lady in the case, instead of an old gentleman."

"Perhaps there is," said Harry; "so come along."

Harry was a great favourite with Dr. Salter, who had attended his family for many years, and seeing his anxiety, complied with his wishes, and set off at once for Elm Grove, Harry riding by the side of the carriage, and pushing on old Robert. They soon reached their destination, and the Doctor was at once ushered into the sick chamber, where he remained for some time while Harry was taking a glass of sherry below, in company with Miss Maitland and Miss Donald. On returning to the drawing-room Harry sprang forward to ask the Doctor how he found his patient.

“No immediate danger,” was the reply; “but if a change for the worse should take place, send for me again directly; I hope, however, Mr. Selwyn will be better in a few days.”

Dr. Salter having written his prescription, was prevailed upon to take some luncheon, as Harry told Miss Maitland he had spoilt his dinner. A glass or two of wine put him in good humour, when, turning to Miss Maitland, he said—

"My friend Harry was in extraordinary haste with me to-day, but I don't wonder at it now," looking archly towards her. "I must give him a piece of advice, however, which I hope you will see is followed, to prevent his being on the sick list also."

"And what is that, Doctor?" inquired Harry.

"Take off those wet garments without another moment's delay; you look like a drowned rat."

"Oh, that's nothing new to me," he replied.

"Perhaps not," gravely observed the Doctor; "but riding in wet things, and sitting in them, is attended with very different consequences; send him home, Miss Maitland, directly, and if he refuses, do not admit him when he calls to-morrow."

Harry took the hint as intended, and left the room, the Doctor soon following, as his carriage was at the door. When they were both gone, Miss Dundonald remarked to her friend—

"Well, Mary, I hope your doubts about Mr. Howard are now removed. He would never

have ridden through all this rain for Mr. Selwyn only ; it was to please you he did so."

"You may be mistaken, Lucy, for I believe he would have done the same for the poorest person in the parish ; that is his general character."

"Very likely, my dear ; but without meaning to detract from his merit, he sped on the wings of love to-day, that's as clear to me as the sun now breaking through the clouds ; but as the rain is over, let us take a turn or two on the gravel-walk."

Early the next morning Harry called again, and finding Mr. Selwyn out of danger, spent the morning with his fair friends ; but as Mr. Selwyn improved in health from that day, Harry's visits became less frequent. Still, Miss Maitland, making allowance for his hunting and other avocations, felt assured of his attachment, until one evening, when sitting alone with her mother, the latter observed—

"I hope, Mary, you do not think too much of Mr. Harry Howard ; depend upon it, his

visits here are not on your account, and I advise you not to take any such fancy into your head."

This speech from her mother pained Mary exceedingly, thinking she must be a better judge than herself of any man's attentions; and on retiring to her room, the most bitter feelings took possession of her heart.

"Can it, indeed, be true, that he does not love me? That my heart is given to one who can make no return? Oh, it cannot be! without him I know and feel life would be a blank! I can never love another, and may Heaven avert this misery from me! Mamma does not know him as well as I do; but I must, and will, be more distant for the future."

Unfortunately, the next morning after this conversation, Harry Howard called again at Elm Grove. Miss Maitland was sitting with Miss Dundonald in the drawing-room, brooding over the remarks her mother had made to her, when the object of her meditations passed the window. Her spirits were very low; nothing but wretch-



edness seemed in store for her, and upon seeing Harry Howard, her feelings quite overpowered her, and she burst into tears. Miss Dundonald endeavoured to rouse her from this prostrate and desponding state of mind, but in vain.

"Indeed, my dear Mary, you must not give way thus; I am quite sure that Mr. Howard loves you."

"No, Lucy; what did mamma tell me last night?—that his visits were to her—not to me; and to think that I have loved without any return, is most humiliating; but I will for the future subdue all my feelings, and be as distant and reserved as mamma could wish. I cannot go into the drawing-room whilst he is here."

"If you do not," said Lucy, "your mamma will be seriously offended; so come, take up your work, and let us go. Mr. Howard saw us as he passed the window, and he will think us both very capricious, and rude also, if we absent ourselves."

Summoning all her pride and resolution, Miss

Maitland received Harry Howard with the most distant politeness, and scarcely joined in the conversation whilst her mother remained in the room. When she left, Harry, who had noticed with pain and astonishment Mary's altered manner, with friendly solicitude begged to know the cause ; if she were ill, or had anything vexed her.

" Oh, no," she replied, in a careless and indifferent tone, without even raising her eyes, which were fixed on her work, " I have a slight head-ache this morning, that is all ;" and she addressed some common-place observation to Miss Dundonald, who was sitting by her side. Harry felt both hurt and indignant at such undeserved treatment, and rising from his chair abruptly, wished her good morning. Miss Maitland listened in breathless silence to his quickly-retreating footsteps, as he paced through the old oak hall ; and when the last echo fell upon her ear, she again burst into tears, exclaiming—

"Oh, Lucy, he is gone! gone, I fear, for ever! My caprice and folly have lost me one of the dearest friends I ever possessed. To please mamma, I have made myself miserable, for he must think now I do not care about him."

"Indeed, my dear Mary, I fear you have gone too far this morning in your reserve to Mr. Howard, and you must expect him to be more distant for the future, at least till some explanation takes place; but he is a man who will never forget his first love, so don't despair; you will soon be friends again."

Harry rode home mortified and deeply pained by Miss Maitland's behaviour; but naturally of a proud and haughty temper, his spirit rose in opposition to other warmer feelings. To be slighted and scorned by the girl he had so deeply loved and served, and without any apparent cause for such treatment, rendered him almost furious.

"No," he exclaimed, "it is impossible—she

cannot even love me as a friend ; why, then, should I submit to such caprice, or bestow another thought upon her? I'll tear her image from my heart, cost what effort it may ; and she shall see and feel that Harry Howard is no whining lover to fawn like a spaniel at her feet."

Harry kept his resolution, and for several weeks did not again cross the threshold of Elm Grove. Mary Maitland, although suffering from the most contending feelings, endeavoured to appear unconcerned and unaffected by his absence, buoying herself up with the hope of his return. Days and weeks passed by, yet he came not ; but she was informed of his being seen riding with other young ladies, and even passing the Lodge gates of Elm Grove. The scene of their last meeting would often recur to her thoughts with bitter reflections on her distant reception of him that unlucky morning ; but how could she have believed him capable of harbouring such resentment for so trivial an

offence? "No," she would reason to herself, "it cannot be on that account; and now I feel convinced, when, alas! too late, that he cares not for me in the least; his conduct proves it too plainly, and he wishes me to see and feel that he never intended me to regard him in any other light than as a mere friend."

A prey to the most miserable and heart-rending anticipations, Mary Maitland's health soon began to fail, her mind ever dwelling on one hopeless subject, and she was soon confined to her room, with a serious attack of illness. Hearing of it, Harry Howard called at Elm Grove, and found Mrs. Selwyn at home, Miss Maitland being still obliged to keep her bed. He remained sitting and talking with her for more than half an hour, and from her gained the information he so much wished to obtain, yet her daughter's name never passed his lips. Although Harry was a great favourite with Mrs. Selwyn, she had taken the idea into her head that his attentions to her daughter were only

those of a neighbour ; and fearing, from a mother's penetration, other feelings had taken possession of her heart, she seized every opportunity of weaning her child from indulging hopes which she imagined would never be realized. Harry's behaviour on this occasion convinced Mrs. Selwyn that her own opinion of him was the true one, little dreaming what was then passing through his mind. As soon, therefore, as he had left the house, she entered her daughter's room with these words—

“ Well, Mary, Mr. Howard has been here ; but notwithstanding my telling him you had been so ill, and were still unable to leave your room, he had not even the common politeness to say he hoped you would soon be better. Now, you see”—(with rather a triumphant look)—“ my opinion, which you thought so lightly of, is, after all, the correct one. Are you now satisfied, my dear ? ”

“ Oh, yes, mamma ; but pray do not again renew the subject.”

“ Well, my love, I will not allude to it any more ; but now, for my sake and your father’s (who is sadly distressed by your illness), pray rouse yourself. Think of your woman’s pride—to harbour thoughts of a man who does not even express for you the feelings of a common acquaintance. It excites my indignation that a child of mine should ever bestow her love on one who treats her in this heartless manner. And who, after all, is Mr. Howard ? Your family is as good—better—higher than his ; and there are many men as good-looking, with better pretensions, who would treat you with that attention and respect which is your due.”

Mary Maitland listened to these and many other cutting remarks directed against Harry Howard by her mother, without comment ; and then answered—

“ I will do all I can, my dearest mother, to rouse myself from indulging any further thoughts of Mr. Howard ; but pray leave me now, as

I feel quite unequal to talk on such a subject."

When her mother left the room, the struggle in poor Mary's heart between love and pride was a fearful one; but still she could not harbour, as her mother did, resentment towards Harry Howard, although now nearly, if not quite, satisfied, that she had mistaken his feelings towards herself. What, however, were hers towards him? Almost the same. Love once admitted, growing, as it had, with her growth, and strengthening with her strength, reigned still triumphant, and no efforts of hers could dislodge him from her breast; but duty to her mother and respect to herself, forbade her ever again showing it to the world.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in mental agony, "that we had never met! and yet I fondly hoped in Harry Howard I had found the counterpart of my dearly-lamented cousin. He would never have treated me thus. It is all like a fearful dream; but now awakened from it, I must rouse myself,—pride will do the rest."



From that day, Mary Maitland began to regain both strength of body and mind; and in her mother's presence and that of company, appeared as cheerful as before.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ABOUT ten miles from Elm Grove resided Mr. and Mrs. Archer, with a large family of daughters, who had become acquainted with Miss Maitland, by frequently meeting her at balls and parties during the preceding season in Bath; and as she had just then received an invitation from one of the girls to spend a few days with them at their country-house, Mrs. Selwyn pressed her to accept it, in the hope of her being benefited by change of air and scene. Harry Howard had several times expressed his disapprobation of these young ladies' flirting, forward manner, and cautioned her against be-

coming intimate with them, especially since certain reports had been circulated with respect to one of the sisters, which were very discreditable, and unfortunately too well founded. Under other circumstances Mary Maitland would have at once declined their invitation ; but now, to show her contempt for Harry Howard's advice, she resolved to accept it.—She was kindly received by the whole family on her arrival at Oakley Park, and most warmly greeted by her favourite, Louisa, the second daughter, a handsome, showy-looking girl, about the same age as Miss Maitland, and of course her *sincere* friend. On retiring to dress for dinner Louisa accompanied her to her room, when the following dialogue took place :—

“I am so delighted to see you, dear Mary, although I cannot compliment you on your looks. You said you had been very ill ; but really, my dear, you are sadly altered, and your spirits seem gone. What can be the matter ?”

“Oh, nothing particular ; I am subject, as you know, to attacks on the chest, and have had

a very severe one lately, but I dare say change of air will soon restore me."

"Well, I hope so," replied Louisa; "but the roses have fled so entirely from your cheeks, that I really must apply a little of the *artificial*, to make you appear more presentable at dinner, as we have some gentlemen coming to dine here this evening."

"No," said Mary, "I have never used, and never will, such things; people must take me as they find me."

"Really, my dear Mary, I must say, this is rather prudish; just the least tint would make you look quite charming. I am naturally so pale, that I am scarcely passable without it," saying which, she dipped her finger in a little box, and was about applying it to her friend's cheek, when Mary sprang away, exclaiming—

"Oh, Louisa, you will seriously offend me if you attempt that again."

"Well, dear, as you please; but now tell me something about Mr. Harry Howard, who was

so attentive to you last season. Has he proposed yet?"

"Oh, no," she said, rather sadly; "nor do I expect he ever will."

"Indeed! you surprise me. He certainly was very much in love with you, if I am a judge of such matters; and I actually laid a bet that you would be married or engaged within the twelve-month."

"Then, Louisa, your bet is lost."

"Not yet, my dear, only six months have elapsed; but tell me, don't you see him often at Elm Grove?"

"Not very, Louisa; he calls occasionally as a neighbour might do, but nothing more;—so now I must prepare my toilet, or I shall be too late for dinner."

Mary Maitland possessed too much prudence and delicacy of feeling to make such a person as Louisa Archer keeper of a secret, which she had resolved should be confined for the future to her own breast only. Moreover, she now sorely repented having, in a moment of pique, accepted

Louisa's invitation to Oakley Park, after her promise to Harry that she would never go there ; but then she thought, " of what consequence now is his opinion to me ? "

Change of scene and society produced the desired effect ; and after a short sojourn at Oakley Park, Mary returned with two of the Miss Archers to Elm Grove, much improved in looks, if not in manners ; for, to disguise her better feelings, she had now assumed the levity and gaiety of her friend Louisa, which she knew full well would convince Harry Howard, when they met, of her alteration of sentiment towards him.

Soon after her return, Mrs. Selwyn gave a large dinner party, and invitations were sent to both the Howards, and accepted by them from different motives — Miss Dundonald was also included.

The evening so impatiently and nervously expected by Mary, arrived ; when she flattered herself some explanation would be afforded by her former lover, as her old and true friend

Lucy had assured her, she felt persuaded of his attachment, notwithstanding appearances.

“Harry Howard,” she said, “is not the man to act thus, from mere whim or caprice—but he thinks you are indifferent to him.”

“Ah, Lucy, you are, as usual, taking his part, even against me, your friend; but I have been studying lately in a different school, and hope you will think me improved to-night.”

“I fear not, Mary; but you have another friend now in Louisa Archer.”

“No, not a true friend like you, dear Lucy; she will never know any secrets of mine.”

Harry Howard, although generally punctual in his engagements, was the last guest on this occasion, and Mrs. Selwyn had just been enquiring of Robert, whether he thought his cousin would come.

“I can scarcely answer for him,” replied Robert; “for he has got into such a confounded sulky humour lately, that one can’t comprehend him, and he looks as fierce as a lion.”

As the door opened, Robert turned his head.

“ Ah ! there he is at last, Mrs. Selwyn ; now judge for yourself.”

All his acquaintances were struck with the haughty air and gloomy aspect of Harry, as he entered the room, and the cold formality with which he paid his respects to Mrs. Selwyn, who never imagined he could have assumed such gravity of deportment towards her so different to formerly. Harry was indeed an altered man in thoughts and manners. The frank and joyous expression of youth had given place to the fixed or careless gaze of the man of the world.

Two short months had effected such a change, that he looked and spoke like a man of forty ; his heart had been seared as if with a red-hot iron—he felt dead to the world and those around him ; and as his cold, apathetic eye rested on Mary Maitland, she quailed beneath that reproachful look, which seemed to say, “ Such as I am, you have made me.”

As he passed where she was sitting with Louisa Archer, the latter, with her usual for-



wardness, said, "You see, Mr. Howard, Miss Maitland has quite recovered — she has been staying with us at Oakley Park, and I think we have brought her home quite well and blooming."

"Indeed," exclaimed Harry, with an air and tone of bitter sarcasm; "she has been staying with you, has she?—of course she could not fail to be benefited."

Miss Maitland shrank behind her friend at this speech; for she well understood his meaning, and could scarcely restrain her tears.

When he was gone, Louisa exclaimed in astonishment, "My goodness, Mary! what can have altered Mr. Harry Howard so?—he is a perfect bear to-night; but never mind his ill-humour, we will play him off a little after dinner. Why, really, Mary, you appear quite frightened at him—that will never do with truant lovers. Laugh, chat, and flirt with other men, that's the only way to bring them to their senses."

"I cannot quite agree with you, Louisa; for

in my opinion, such conduct would only estrange a true lover more and more."

"Ah, Mary, you are only a novice yet in these affairs ; but follow my advice this one night, and be as gay and lively as you can—just try the experiment once."

"Well, perhaps I may, for I think Mr. Howard is quite rude and overbearing, though his good opinion is almost a matter of indifference to me."

The dinner hour passed, during which Harry did not address a word to Miss Maitland, who sat opposite to him with Robert, who was, as usual, most obsequious in his attentions.

On returning to the drawing-room, Harry threw himself on a sofa, in a retired part of the room, brooding over his melancholy reflections. Miss Dundonald, pitying his evidently depressed spirits, went and sat down by his side.

Addressing him in a gentle tone of voice, she said, " You will not think me impertinent if I ask, what has made you so cold and repulsive in your manner to us all ? believe me, my enquiries proceed from no idle curiosity."

"I thank you, Miss Dundonald, for your kindness ; but I can only tell you, that I have been suffering lately from great depression of spirits, and I cannot appear gay, as others do, when I feel miserable."

"Pray tell me, Mr. Howard, what has rendered you so wretched ; I may perhaps console, if I cannot relieve you."

Harry was silent for a few moments, when turning to her, he said,—

"I will read you a riddle. I once possessed a beautiful little plant, which I watched and tended day by day in its rapid growth, with all the loving fondness of which man is capable ; but when it grew up to maturity, and the flower expanded in all its loveliness, I gathered it and placed it next my heart, and then it stung me like a nettle."

Miss Dundonald guessed his meaning, and was about to reply, when they were interrupted by the approach of the two Miss Archers, Miss Maitland, and Robert Howard, all laughing and giggling together, who took up a position

near the sofa, purposely, as it appeared, with the intention of annoying Harry Howard.

His indignant eye rested for a moment on the giddy group and then fell, with a meaning look, on Miss Dundonald.

She read his heart's feelings, and rising, said,

"Come, Mr. Howard, let us go to another part of the room."

"No," he replied, "you can go, but I shall remain where I am. They have sought me for the purpose of annoyance, and shall not be disappointed. The buzzing of gnats cannot scare away Harry Howard, although they may sting him to the quick."

Miss Dundonald joined Mrs. Selwyn, leaving Harry Howard sitting alone.

Robert chatted away with the Miss Archers in his usual style, talking all kinds of nonsense, with insinuations against Harry, to make them laugh, in which Miss Maitland (whose back was turned on Harry) joined also.

The subject of ladies riding was then discussed; when Bob was quizzing the ridiculous

figures many cut on horse-back without proper instruction.

“ Oh,” said Miss Maitland, “ I intend, next summer, taking lessons of Mr. Mead,—(a fashionable riding-master in Bath, who had generally an escort of half-a-dozen Bath girls in his train, scampering over the country to the disgust of all right-thinking persons, and of whose conduct Harry had often made severe remarks to her) ;—“ he is reported to be a gentleman in reduced circumstances, and appears very attentive to his pupils.”

On these words striking his ear, Harry, addressing Miss Maitland, said,

“ Why should you take lessons of Mr. Mead ? Surely you can be better instructed at home, if you require any lessons, which I do not think you do.”

Without turning her head, or venturing a look on Harry, Miss Maitland replied,

“ I shall certainly take a few lessons of Mr. Mead notwithstanding.”

This haughty speech was cheered by Louisa.

"That's right, my dear ; always think and act for yourself," casting a contemptuous look on Harry, who quickly rising and facing her, rejoined,—

"And accept, instead of a true friend's offering, the ready incense of fools. But as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion."

These last words were uttered in a slow, distinct tone, and there being a silence then in the room, reached the ears of Miss Dundonald and Mrs. Selwyn, who were sitting together.

Miss Archer made no reply. The arrow went home, and as Harry turned indignantly away, Bob remarked,—

"There, Miss Louisa ! this comes of bearding the lion. I told you Harry was in no humour to be trifled with to-night."

"Lucy," said Mrs. Selwyn, "that was a very rude and unkind speech of Harry Howard's, considering the unfortunate affair with Louisa's sister."

"It was, perhaps, a little too hasty," she re-

plied ; “ but then, my dear Mrs. Selwyn, you do not know what I do about the matter. Louisa has been doing all in her power to annoy and harass Mr. Howard this evening, and she came with her party purposely near the sofa (where he was sitting with me), laughing and making jeering remarks, which she knew would irritate and vex him, and I am sorry to add, Mary also joined with her. I heard much to this effect, and seeing Mr. Howard in such dreadfully low spirits, I begged him to leave that part of the room, but he resolved to remain. From what I overheard, however, of their foolish jesting, I think Louisa has only met with her deserts.”

“ Indeed, Lucy, I am sorry to hear this, and that Mary should have acted so unbecomingly, and I shall certainly speak to her on the subject. But what can be the matter, my dear, with Mr. Henry Howard — perhaps you may know that also ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Lucy, “ I believe I do ; although he has not made me his confidant.”

"Then pray tell me, my dear, what it is."

"I respect Mr. Howard too much," said Lucy, "to be the means of wounding his feelings in any way, and therefore my thoughts of him must not be divulged to others, to cause him, perhaps, more annoyance."

"But surely, Lucy, you may confide in me; I am no giddy girl, and really feel interested about him."

"Promise me, then, dear Mrs. Selwyn, that you will never mention, even to Mary or Mr. Selwyn, what I suspect to be the cause."

"Yes, Lucy, I do faithfully promise you."

"Then, Harry Howard loves one, who he believes does not return his affection."

"Who, Lucy? who can she be?"

"Your own dear Mary."

"Oh! Lucy, you cannot be in earnest—or must be mistaken; it is impossible—he cannot love her—he never comes here now as he used to do—and is almost a stranger."

"And will be a greater stranger still. I know him well—Mary treated him almost contempt-



uously the last time he called here, and of course he would not soon return ; and how has she behaved to him to-night ? Oh, Mrs. Selwyn, truly do I feel for him, and he has too manly and sensitive a heart, to bear such indignities from one he so deeply loves, without the most bitter anguish."

"My dear Lucy," said Mrs. Selwyn, "you astonish me—I know Mary liked Henry, and fretted about him so, that I sent her for change of air to Oak Park ; but I do not now believe, even after what you have told me, that he thinks seriously of her."

"Dear Mrs. Selwyn, he thinks of no one else but your own dear Mary—but I will say no more."

"Then, Lucy, I have wronged him ; but go and tell him I wish to speak to him."

Lucy crossed the room, and Harry rose to accompany her to Mrs. Selwyn, who held out her hand, saying in a kind tone of voice—

"You have scarcely spoken to me this evening."

"I beg pardon for my apparent inattention," replied Harry; "but I saw you so encompassed by others, far more agreeable than myself, that I thought my presence might be an intrusion."

"Well then, to show you this is not the case, you must now sit and talk with me a little."

Harry complied, and shaking off his gloomy thoughts, endeavoured to make himself as conversable as possible, and for a time succeeded; but a fit of abstraction again came over him, which Mrs. Selwyn noticed.

"You are out of spirits, Mr. Howard—I hope you are not ill?"

"Oh no; but we cannot always be the same; our thoughts are not in our own keeping; and I confess I do not feel in a very cheerful mood to-night, and therefore must soon take leave."

"Well, do not go yet—and you must come and dine with me again on Friday next."

Harry hesitated, trying to make some excuse about other engagements; but Mrs. Selwyn would take no denial.

As Harry rose, Miss Maitland joined her

mother, who having heard his speech to Louisa Archer, remarked—

“ I fear the Miss Archers have been quizzing Mr. Howard this evening, which is not proper or becoming at any time for young ladies ; but I have asked him to dine here again on Friday, when I hope he will not be subjected to a repetition of such conduct.”

Mary felt her cheeks burn at her mother's remarks, and remained silent. Music was now introduced, and those who had some distance to return home, soon after began to take their leave. Harry shook hands with Mrs. Selwyn, and with a distant bow to Miss Maitland, quitted the room.



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